

Letter: Mary Billings Greene: Urging approval of Marcus for key civil rights post

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The Rhode Island Coalition for Israel, a grassroots Christian/Jewish pro-Israel organization, urges Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-Rhode Island, to vote on January 11 to approve Ken Marcus as assistant secretary for civil rights in the U.S. Department of Education.

Many campuses across the country have become unfriendly to students with pro-Israel views. This primarily affects Jewish students, but other groups are at risk as well. For instance, the Alliance Defending Freedom, a nonprofit organization that defends the religious liberty of Christians, has stated: “Many public universities use unconstitutional speech codes to censor students on campus. By using terms like ‘offensive,’ ‘demeaning,’ and ‘uncomfortable,’ these speech codes give administrators broad discretion to silence students, which is unconstitutional.”

Marcus is well-qualified for the position, having served the second Bush administration in fair housing and equal opportunity. He was also the de facto head of the Department of Education’s civil rights office and later staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

But as president of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, Marcus has frequently come into conflict with radical supporters of the sociopathic, anti-Israel BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanctions) movement, which has undertaken a vicious campaign to smear him and his record in civil rights enforcement.

Senator Whitehouse has been publicly noncommittal on the nomination. We urge him not to make this a question of resistance to Trump. Putting Ken Marcus in office is crucial to ensuring free speech and equal treatment of all minorities on our college campuses.

Mary Billings Greene

Wakefield