

We Stand with Israel



Statement from the Jewish Community of St. Louis

November 1, 2023

We are writing to express our anger and concern with Representative Cori Bush's communication about the recent events in Israel and Gaza. Numerous times over the last 23 days, we have felt her words to be insensitive, incorrect, and fanning the flames of antisemitism.

On October 29th, Representative Bush issued a statement on social media referring to the military campaign Israel is conducting against Hamas as "ethnic cleansing." To accuse Israel of ethnic cleansing as it seeks to defend itself and locate hundreds of hostages still held captive in Gaza—taken only because they were assumed to be Jews—is sickening. The 60,000 Jewish members of the St. Louis community deserve an apology for her lack of decency, disregard for history, and for intentionally fueling antisemitism and hatred, especially at a time when law enforcement in America is recording an all-time high in violent attacks against Jews. In the last century, the Jewish people were the victims of the worst ethnic cleansing campaign in history, and the scars from the Holocaust are still fresh in our collective memory.

Her statement not only fails to advance peace, but it incites anger and the potential of further violence toward the Jewish community.

Her silence on Hamas's terrorism makes the Jewish community feel she doesn't understand that a violent massacre of people took place in Israel just three weeks ago—when Hamas terrorists brutally murdered at least 1,400 Israelis, kidnapped more than 230 (29 of whom have American citizenship), and injured and traumatized thousands more. Representative Bush has shown little outrage against the horrendous attacks by an organization whose very charter calls for the killing of all Jewish people.

To the contrary, in private discussions she has stated repeatedly that she supports the Jewish community, is listening to our fears and concerns, and stands against antisemitism. She then issues public statements that directly contradict what she told us in private.

Representative Bush has established herself as an outspoken leader for Palestinian rights, dignity, and safety. Her language carries weight among her supporters. It is even more important that she speaks with the care and empathy she claims to extend to all people by not sharing falsehoods that foster antisemitic hate.

We call upon Representative Bush to stop this incendiary language about Israel, apologize to the Jewish community in St. Louis, and engage in honest and accountable dialogue about the issues related to Israel and the Palestinian people.

Signed by:

ADL, Jordan Kadosh, Regional Director

Agudas Israel of St. Louis

AJC St. Louis

Bais Abraham Congregation, Rabbi Garth Silberstein

Chesed Shel Emeth Society & Beth Shalom Cemetery, Anita Feigenbaum, Executive Director

Citizens For a Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East, Richard Senturia, Director

Coalition for Jewish Values Missouri, Rabbi Ze'ev Smason, Chairman

Congregation B'nai Amoona, Rabbi Jeffrey Abraham

Congregation Shaare Emeth, Rabbi James Bennett, Senior Rabbi, & Rabbi Andrea Goldstein

Congregation Temple Israel, Rabbi Mark Shook, Rabbi Emeritus, & Rabbi Cantor Sam Radwine

Esther Miller Bais Yaakov, Byron Cohen, President

H.F. Epstein Hebrew Academy, Jeffrey Glogower, Board President, & Rabbi Miller, Head of School

IGNITE YP, Rabbi Avi Roberts

Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis, Joel Iskiwitch, Board Chair, Maharat Rori Picker Neiss, Executive Director, & Rabbi Scott Shafrin

Jewish Federation of St. Louis, Bob Newmark, Board Chair, & Brian Herstig, President & CEO

Jewish Student Union of St Louis, Rabbi Mike Rovinsky, Executive Director

Kol Rinah, Rabbi Noah Arnow

National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis, Nancy Litz, Board President, Ellen Alper, CEO, & Amy Kuo Hammerman, Missouri State Policy Advocate

Missouri Torah Institute, Rabbi David Fromowitz, Rabbi Avrohom Goldman, Rabbi Shmuel Wasser

Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School, Dr. Sara Lander, Board Chairperson, & Raquel Scharf-Anderson, Head of School

St. Louis Jewish Community Center, Ted Flom, Board Chair, Lynn Wittels, President & CEO, & Rabbi Brad Horwitz, Chief Jewish Engagement Officer

St. Louis Friends of Israel, Galit Lev-Harir, Co-President, & Traci Goldstein, Co-President

Temple Emanuel, Rabbi Janine Schloss, & Rabbi Elizabeth Hersh

The St. Louis Rabbinical and Cantorial Association (STLRCA)

Torah Prep School of St. Louis, Rabbi Tzvi Freedman, Executive Director, Rabbi Binyamin Travis, CEO, Dr. Dov, & Tziona Zeffrin

Traditional Congregation of Creve Coeur, Rabbi Seth D Gordon

United Hebrew Congregation, Rabbi Brigitte Rosenberg, Senior Rabbi, Cori Neidenberg, Executive Director, & Rabbi David Reinhart, Associate Rabbi

United Orthodox Jewish Community, Vaad Hoer of St. Louis

WashU Hillel, Rabbi Jordan Gerson, Silk Foundation Campus Rabbi, & Jacqueline Ulin Levey, CEO

Young Israel of St. Louis, Rabbi Moshe Shulman

Individual Community Leaders: Rabbi Amy Feder, Rabbi Michael Alper, Rabbi Matt Derrenbacher, Uri Krieger