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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Florida Colleges and Universities and All Florida College and University
Campus Police Chiefs

FROM: Attorney General Ashley Moody

DATE: October 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Protecting Jewish College Students and Faculty

Last week, Hamas terrorists attacked the nation of Israel, killing thousands of men, women, and children. These acts of violent aggression are sickening and have no place in civil and organized society. We continue to pray for the people of Israel, as well as their friends and family across the world and in Florida who fear for the safety of their loved ones.

In the aftermath of Hamas's terrorist attacks, our office has heard reports that tensions have spilled over onto our college campuses. Jewish students report feeling threatened as a result of antisemitism on campus. Specific incidents reported in just the last week include a Jewish student at Columbia University who was beaten with a stick in front of the school library after hanging flyers with the names and pictures of Israeli hostages captured by Hamas, and a Jewish student at Drexel University who was the victim of arson of his dorm room.

Please be reminded that the State of Florida has a zero-tolerance policy for hate crimes, including those based on religious and ethnic heritage, and this extends to our college campuses. Florida stands with Israel and those affected by Hamas's horrific crimes, and we cannot stand by and let those who wish to terrorize, harass, assault, or threaten our Jewish communities do so with impunity. All Campus Police Chiefs and college officials are encouraged to remain vigilant to ensure the safety of our students and faculty. In furtherance of this, please take the time to refresh your familiarity with §1000.05, Florida Statutes, §775.085, Florida Statutes, § 784.0493, Florida Statutes, § 806.13, Florida Statutes, and § 810.098, Florida Statutes.

Section 1000.05 includes religion as a protected class with regard to discrimination against students and employees in Florida's K-20 public education system. The bill requires a public K-

20 educational institution to treat discrimination by students or employees or resulting from institutional policies motivated by anti-Semitism as discrimination motivated by race.

Section 775.085 increases the felony or misdemeanor degree of an offense if the commission of the offense shows prejudice based on the race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, homeless status, or advanced age of the victim. Section 775.085 also creates a civil remedy for persons or organizations who are the victims of hate crimes.

Sections 784.0493, 806.13, and 810.098 were signed into law by Governor DeSantis on May 1, 2023. These laws prohibit the willful and malicious harassing or intimidating of another person based on the person's wearing or displaying an indicia relating to religious or ethnic heritage and provide further protections for persons on a state university or Florida College System institution. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement has provided detailed guidance on these laws through a memo that is available via secure link on CJNET.

The State of Florida will not tolerate violence against our Jewish student and faculty population, or any other person in the State based on their religious or ethnic heritage. Any campus law enforcement officer considering charging a suspect under the statutes discussed above should consult his/her legal advisor, his/her state attorney, or the Office of Statewide Prosecution and make expedited arrests when appropriate. Thank you for your service to our state and our students.