

**National Lawyers Guild
SEATTLE CHAPTER**



April 13, 2016

Dear Dean Michele Storms and Director Aline Carton-Listfeld:

The Seattle Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild writes today to encourage you to withdraw all programming support by Social Justice Tuesdays for the event “Why Universities Need a Definition of Anti-Semitism,” featuring Kenneth Marcus and co-sponsored by StandWithUs Northwest and the Louis D. Brandeis Center. We support efforts to confront racism and bigotry on the University of Washington campus, including through thoughtful conversations about combating anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. However, the Seattle Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild has consistently voiced its strong objection to these two organizations’ specific campaign in educational settings, which we believe to be an abuse of Title VI claims with the consequence of silencing political speech and marginalizing Arab and Muslim students.

Additionally, groups like StandWithUs (a group that is funded in part by the Israeli Foreign Ministry) support extremism and violence in the Middle East, while advancing an agenda that is actually anti-Semitic. The false conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism is hurtful and insulting to many people in the Jewish community who do not support the violent expropriation of Palestinian land. Thus, we believe that the event is in direct opposition to the UW Race and Equity Action plan as the event is promoted by racist groups who endorse violence and who wish to further marginalize Palestinians and their Jewish supporters.

We support the students’ request that the administration release a statement attesting to the reasons for cancellation, and hope this experience may serve as an opportunity to prioritize learning opportunities for students on how to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia from an intersectional perspective, rather than through the extremist views of StandWithUs.

Sincerely,

The Seattle Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild