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Gibson Dunn Wins Dismissal of All Claims Against Student Named in $10 Million Suit for Challenging Antisemitism on Campus

Firm News | April 1, 2026

Gibson Dunn teamed up with the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights to secure dismissal with prejudice of a slew of damages claims filed against a former Georgetown University student for speaking out against antisemitism on campus.

The ruling marks a significant win for the firm and its client after a year of litigation in state and federal courts. The student criticized Georgetown's hiring of an administrator who posted virulent anti-Jewish content on social media. Following an investigation, the administrator was terminated. She then sued Georgetown for wrongful termination and later expanded her claims to include the student and others who expressed their opinions about her conduct.

Representing the student pro bono, Gibson Dunn and the Brandeis Center moved to dismiss the claims on multiple grounds, including that they improperly targeted protected speech and expression on matters of public concern.

In a March 31 opinion, the Court agreed that the suit improperly attacked the student's First Amendment right to address content that was "an affront to her Jewish identity, especially in the immediate aftermath of the October 7 attack." The dismissal order stressed the strong public interest in protecting speech on university hiring decisions, and warned that allowing the suit would "undoubtedly chill campus speech" and undercut the "marketplace of ideas."

Gibson partner Elizabeth Papez said "Gibson Dunn is proud to have achieved justice for our client in this lawsuit, which improperly sought to punish her exercise of First Amendment rights and chill the expression of countless others. We're especially pleased that the Court agreed that our client's First Amendment defense "packs a strong punch" and that the claims against her are so flawed they require dismissal with prejudice."

The victory advances Gibson Dunn's longstanding leadership in combating antisemitism by providing free legal assistance to individuals who experience antisemitic discrimination, intimidation, harassment, vandalism or violence.

The Gibson Dunn team was led by partners Elizabeth Papez and David Kusnetz, senior associate Lavi Ben Dor, and former associate Josh Zuckerman. Papez and Ben Dor argued the winning motion with support from associates Tamara Skinner and Ester Cross and former associate Audrey Payne.

Related Capabilities

Related People

Elizabeth P. Papez

David M. Kusnetz

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Litigation

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