

EXCLUSIVE: Sanctioned Penn Professor Amy Wax Says ‘Possibility’ Trump Will Join Her Fight Against University That Punished Her for ‘Offensive’ Speech

The embattled professor, sanctioned for offending her colleagues with her comments about race and gender, speaks to the Sun about her lawsuit against her Ivy League employer.



The outspoken University of Pennsylvania law professor, Amy Wax, has been sanctioned by the University of Pennsylvania.

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Professor Amy Wax, in an interview with the Sun, discloses that “the possibility has been brought up” that the Trump administration could join her federal civil lawsuit against the University of Pennsylvania for violating “core principles of the First Amendment” and enforcing policies that are “racially discriminatory.”

Penn, as it’s called, has been [trying](#) to fire Dr. Wax, a tenured legal scholar who has argued cases before the Supreme Court and also happens to be a physician, for years due to statements she’s made — most controversially about the performance of her Black students — that have roiled the campus and made her persona non grata among the overwhelmingly liberal faculty.

Dr. Wax is now suing Penn after it punished her, including reducing her compensation, with what her complaint calls “academic discipline in the form of major sanctions.” The suit, in which the law professor uses a legal theory whose shape emerged in the wake of the attacks of October 7, 2023, to take on her hostile employer, could gain momentum from Washington’s help. The Trump

administration could see in the polarizing professor an ally in its push to change the culture on America's campuses.

Penn [accuses](#) Dr. Wax of committing a “major infraction” for “making intentional and incessant racist, sexist, xenophobic, and homophobic statements and actions that inflict harm.”

Penn's faculty appears to have been especially incensed at Dr. Wax's claims that “non-Western groups” are resentful toward “Western people” and that in her experience, Black students had rarely graduated at the top of their law school classes. She [told](#) the Sun in 2023 that she rejects the “premise that all groups are equal in their skills, ability, preferences, and talents,” but has always maintained that she has never discriminated against any student.

Penn and its lawyers ruminated on how to punish Dr. Wax in spite of her tenure. The university settled on a punishment that included a one-year suspension at half pay, the loss of a named chair and summer pay, a public reprimand, and a requirement that she note in the course of every public appearance that she does not speak for Penn. She calls the process that led to her sanctions “abnormal.”

Her complaint alleges that at Penn, “Speakers, like Professor Wax, who are White and/or Jewish are far more likely to be disciplined for offending speech than speakers who are racial minorities (other than Jews).” Dr. Wax argues that this disparate treatment violates, among other statutes, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

That law prohibits racial discrimination by all institutions that receive federal funding. The university's annual financial report discloses that Penn received one billion in federal funds for research in 2024, though the total dispensed from Washington could well be higher. Typically at elite private universities, federal grant money is the second-largest source of income after tuition, and is essential to their operations as major research institutions.

Dr. Wax's complaint also invokes Title VII, which bans discrimination on the part of employers. Her suit comes as the new administration [moves](#) [aggressively](#) against “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” purging it from federal agencies. Major corporations are also ending DEI programs. At the same time, private educational institutions, while recently being barred by the Supreme Court from using race in admissions, are far from rushing to embrace color-blindness as a governing principle.

Penn insists that Dr. Wax's comments caused her colleagues to be "demoralized and demeaned." It cites an invitation Dr. Wax extended to a "renowned white supremacist, Jared Taylor, to be the featured guest speaker" in one of her courses. Dr. Wax previously told the Sun that "whether you like it or not Jared Taylor is an educated informed articulate proponent of a far right position."

Dr. Wax tells the Sun that "Penn has zero intellectual integrity" and that its behavior toward her has been nothing short of "disgraceful." A Penn spokesman tells the Sun: "We typically do not offer comment on pending litigation."

Dr. Wax tells the Sun that Penn is in "the iron grip of far-left progressives," and contrasts her own punishment with the lack of sanctions for "those who criticize Israel and the Jews in the most savage terms." She decries what she describes as the ascendancy of "cancel culture and wokeism."

Last year, Penn's president, Liz Magill, resigned under pressure after she waffled at a congressional hearing about campus antisemitism. Yet Dr. Wax finds that within Penn's ivy walls, an ideological bent that is hostile to Jews still thrives — that Penn "had actual knowledge of the antisemitic speech it allowed." The complaint compiles a laundry list of incidents that, Dr. Wax maintains, shows the disparate treatment accorded to Jews as opposed to other minorities.

The filing cites a cartoon drawn by a lecturer, Dwayne Booth, that it calls "a literal blood libel." The complaint explains that the cartoon depicts "three Jewish individuals drinking glasses of blood" and notes that no disciplinary proceedings have been initiated against Mr. Booth. The Second United States Appeals Circuit held, though, in 2014 that "Jews are considered a race" for the purpose of federal anti-discrimination statutes.

Dr. Wax contends that Title VI is a "powerful" tool because it bars any part of an institution from accessing federal largesse if discrimination is detected "in any way." She tells the Sun that Penn has failed in its "fundamental duty" to construct a fair and consistent set of policies around speech on campus, and that the school's "real slush fund is federal funds."

Title VI has just this week proved to be a cudgel to compel at least one Ivy League university to alter its policy toward Jews — Harvard, whose president was also forced to resign last year after appearing insensitive to antisemitism at the same congressional hearing that doomed Penn's president.

Harvard and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law and Jewish Americans for Fairness in Education announced a settlement that will see Harvard adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, which among other provisions maintains that anti-Zionism can amount to antisemitism.

Dr. Wax tells the Sun that while she would welcome the Trump administration joining her suit, Washington can pull federal funding even without formal participation. When the Sun asked Dr. Wax if she believes that she has adduced sufficient factual findings about Penn's unlawful, discriminatory behavior to warrant that step, she responds, "Oh my gosh yes," citing Penn's glaring double standard in the treatment of speech.

Ms. Wax's complaint alleges that "Penn tolerated speech targeting Jews" but not commentary deemed to be critical of other groups, such as Blacks, and that the school "chose not to punish antisemitic speech" while punishing her for statements that upset other minority groups. She contends that at Penn "some racial and ethnic groups — such as Jews — can be criticized with absolute impunity while similar criticisms on topics involving other groups that Penn deems worthy of greater protection prompt a disciplinary response."

Ms. Wax's complaint underscores Penn's alleged double standard by citing the celebration of an act of violence — the murder of the chief executive officer, Brian Thompson, of UnitedHealthCare — by one of the school's humanities professors, Julia Alekseyeva.

Ms. Alekseyeva called the alleged assassin, Luigi Mangione, a Penn alumnus, the "icon we all need and deserve." Ms. Alekseyeva also asserted that she has "never been prouder to be a professor at the University of Pennsylvania." No discipline ensued.

Dr. Wax asks the district court for the eastern District of Pennsylvania to enjoin the discipline against her, rule that Penn's free speech policy violates federal law and the Constitution, bar its enforcement, restore her prestigious endowed chair, and award her damages, including lost wages.

If Dr. Wax succeeds, her case could be a template. Washington is undoubtedly watching. The professor, though, adds a word of warning — she reckons that "we have not yet reached peak woke. The universities, especially, are resistant" to any reckoning with their dominant ideology.