

Disruptions of Public Pro-Israel Events

The First Amendment protects a speaker's right to speak and a listener's right to listen. When a protester disrupts a speaker, they may be violating the constitutional rights of the speaker and the audience.

Disruptions also often implicate university policies and state laws. Many states have laws against disrupting public events, and most states punish trespass—remaining on property after being asked to leave by the appropriate authority. Likewise, university codes of conduct often prohibit behavior that interferes with the learning process or university events. Some schools go even further, explicitly regulating protest behavior. You can find these policies on a university's website.

Document everything! Take videos of disruptions and keep screenshots and emails for evidence.

Case Study #1: In February 2010, Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren was invited to speak at UC Irvine. Anti-Israel students, mostly members of the Muslim Student Union, repeatedly interrupted Ambassador Oren to prevent him from speaking. They ignored requests from university officials to maintain civility. As a result, 11 students were arrested for disrupting. Ten of them were convicted of public disruption and conspiracy to disrupt. [Video](#) footage shot by StandWithUs provided critical evidence leading to the convictions.

Disruptions – Best Practices

Before the Event:

- Post signs on event doors stating the relevant law and university policy. This provides notice to attendees that disruptions are illegal (See sample script below).
- Contact the relevant campus office to ensure that campus law enforcement and administrators are aware of both the event and the possibility of an illegal disruption. Remind police that state law and/or university policy prohibit substantial disruptions and that you would like disruptors arrested.

At the Event:

- At the start of the event, read a script stating that disruptions are illegal (See sample script below).
- If there is a disruption, make sure the speaker and audience remain calm and avoid engaging protesters.
- Ask security to remove protesters and arrest anyone violating the law.
- Record evidence! Film the event. Disruptors' faces are more important to record than faces of the audience, for future evidence.

Questions? Contact the StandWithUs Legal Department at legal@standwithus.com.

Sample Script to Post on Event Doors and Announce at Start of Event

We hope that you choose not to disrupt this event because we are here to promote dialogue and understanding.

However, should you intend to disrupt, please be informed that in [Name of State], it is a crime to knowingly and unreasonably act in a way to alarm or disturb others, or to remain on property once you are asked to leave by the appropriate authorities.

In addition, it is a violation of university policy to disrupt or obstruct university approved activities, such as this event. School policy also prohibits disruptive conduct, or racial or ethnic harassment.

If you do choose to leave, please do so quietly. Again, we hope you do not leave and instead choose to stay and participate in the conversation.

NOTE: Each state and university has its own relevant rules and laws. The above script was modified from a campus in Illinois. **To find out more about the appropriate rules and laws in your state and on your campus, please contact legal@standwithus.com.** We suggest you print a script and post it on all the event's entrances. Contact the relevant campus office to ensure that campus law enforcement and administrators are aware of the event and the possibility of an illegal disruption.