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Jewish Organizations, Synagogues Withdraw from San Diego Pride due to Safety Concerns Surrounding Kehlani's Performance

SAN DIEGO, CA (June 6, 2025) — In light of San Diego Pride's decision to allow musical artist Kehlani to remain a headliner at this year's Pride Festival despite Kehlani's repeated amplification of violent antisemitic rhetoric, all participating Jewish organizations and synagogues — many of which have marched with, volunteered for or supported Pride for years — will be withdrawing from the 2025 event due to serious safety concerns. That includes the festival's current volunteer director of medical operations and assistant director of medical operations, Dr. Jennifer Anger and Eliyahu Cohen-Mizrahi, both of whom are Jewish and have also stepped away from their roles.

Their decision comes after The Finest Community Coalition [released a statement last month](#), signed by nearly three dozen Jewish organizations, urging San Diego Pride to reconsider giving Kehlani a platform. That appeal has thus far gone unanswered, and as a result, there will be no organized Jewish presence at San Diego Pride this year.

"My role at Pride has always been to ensure the health and safety of everyone attending, but as a Jewish San Diegan, I can no longer ignore the very real risks that come with normalizing hate speech like the kind Kehlani has promoted," said Dr. Anger, who has volunteered as a medical director for the festival for the last two years. "It's heartbreaking to step away from an event I've supported for years, but when the Jewish community's safety is treated as negotiable, we're left with no choice. Pride should be a place of healing and inclusion — not one that turns its back on a community in pain."

Kehlani's [hateful messages](#), including calls to "eradicate Zionism" and for an "Intifada Revolution," are not only dehumanizing, but history has shown that when they are normalized and platformed, they can lead to real-world violence against Jews. The recent domestic terror attacks in Boulder, Colorado, and Washington, D.C. — both carried out by assailants who echoed similar hateful rhetoric — have intensified fears among Jewish San Diegans, underscoring the dangerous consequences of unchecked antisemitism in public spaces.

"As a queer, a Jew, a Zionist and as someone who is horrified at the suffering in Gaza, I will not be participating in Pride this year — and neither should any organization that claims to be inclusive and strives to be a safe place for all," said Laura Stratton, a member of Temple Emanu-El of San Diego and the LGBTQ+ community who has been attending and volunteering for Pride in San Diego as well as in other cities for more than 35 years.

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Other respected institutions, including New York City Pride and Cornell University, have already taken steps to remove this artist from their events due to concerns for safety and inclusion. Unfortunately, San Diego Pride chose not to follow suit. It is for these reasons that the following organizations have decided not to participate in this year's festivities:

- Jewish Federation of San Diego
- Anti-Defamation League of San Diego
- Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center (JCC)
- Temple Emanu-El of San Diego
- Congregation Beth Israel
- Congregation Dor Hadash
- Tifereth Israel Synagogue
- Temple Adat Shalom

"Now more than ever, Pride should be a celebration of inclusion and solidarity, not a platform for divisive voices that incite hatred and violence," said Heidi Gantwerk, President and CEO of Jewish Federation of San Diego County. "As we've seen in D.C. and Boulder, when antisemitism is ignored or tolerated, it fuels a culture that leads to violence. We cannot wait for tragedy to strike our own community — again — before we act."

San Diego Pride still has the chance to course correct and restore Pride as a space where all communities feel genuinely included and safe. Jewish groups continue to urge San Diego Pride organizers to reflect on the message being sent by continuing to feature Kehlani — and whether safety and equal rights can truly be hallmarks of this event under the present circumstances.

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About Jewish Federation of San Diego

For nearly 90 years, Jewish Federation of San Diego has worked to ensure there will be a vibrant, caring, connected and enduring Jewish community in San Diego, Israel and around the world for generations to come. The nonprofit organization addresses the needs of the most vulnerable in the Jewish community; provides training and growth opportunities for future Jewish leaders; builds people-to-people connections with Jews in Israel and across the world; invests in increased security for all local Jewish institutions and much more. Federation also plays a vital convening role in our community, bringing partners and supporters to the table to tackle the most pressing Jewish issues that no one organization can address alone. More at jewishinsandiego.org.

About The Finest Community Coalition

Embracing San Diego's moniker as America's Finest City, The Finest Community Coalition is an independent initiative that takes a community-wide approach to combat antisemitism together for a better San Diego. Established in 2024 and launched publicly in April 2025, the Coalition serves as a collaborative platform for Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and leaders to coordinate strategies, share best practices, map existing efforts and fill gaps, and respond collectively when appropriate to rising antisemitism. The Coalition is dedicated to ensuring that San Diego remains a place where its Jewish population can be safe, secure and proud to be Jewish. More at finestcommunitysd.org.