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City Attorney Zach Klein Announces Guilty Pleas in Jewish Student Center Vandalism Cases

Prosecutors worked with the Ohio State University Hillel Jewish Student Center on response that balances accountability with restorative justice

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced that the two individuals charged in the vandalism of the Ohio State University Hillel Jewish Student Center in November each pleaded guilty to a fourth-degree misdemeanor criminal trespass charge. The pleas come after Hillel officials requested a restorative justice plan for the individuals. As part of that rigorous plan, prosecutors dropped misdemeanor charges of ethnic intimidation, theft, and criminal mischief.

“Hate has no home in Columbus, and as City Attorney, I take bias-fueled crimes very seriously. In every one of these types of cases, I instruct prosecutors to listen to victims in order to pursue the most appropriate outcome,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“In this case, Hillel pushed for a response that balanced accountability with opportunities for restorative justice, and working with Hillel officials and defense counsel, we created a rigorous plan that met these demands. I will continue to stand with our Jewish friends and neighbors and all who have increasingly become targets for violence and hate-fueled rhetoric.”**

As part of the plea offer, defendants participated in hours-long listening and learning sessions with Jewish Students from Hillel, attended a dinner with a local rabbi, and enrolled in a workshop at the Center. In addition, the individuals gave a talk about their experiences to Hillel’s board. Defendants have completed each of these requirements.