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The U.S. Department of Justice has launched an investigation into the protests that erupted at the University of California, Berkeley, during a Turning Point USA campus event—marking the Trump administration’s first major intervention in campus demonstrations this academic year.

The protest took place during the final stop of Turning Point's college tour, which began with the event where the group's founder, Charlie Kirk, was assassinated. Anti-fascist demonstrators gathered outside the venue, leading to clashes and at least three arrests. Videos from the scene showed chants of "No Trump, No KKK, no fascist USA," while police from both the city and university moved in to separate opposing groups.

UC Berkeley issued a statement condemning violence or intimidation aimed at disrupting lawful expression and confirmed its cooperation with federal and local authorities. The university noted that the Turning Point event proceeded without interruption and drew around 900 attendees.

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon said the DOJ's Civil Rights Division is conducting a full review of potential criminal and civil violations, citing UC Berkeley's "history of not protecting conservative speakers." She also referenced a 2018 lawsuit in which the university settled claims of discriminatory restrictions placed on conservative commentators.

Free speech experts cautioned that it is too early to determine whether any rights were violated, urging both federal officials and university leaders not to blur the line between criminal conduct and protected protest. They noted that public institutions have an obligation to uphold First Amendment protections regardless of political pressure.

The Berkeley protest comes amid increasing federal involvement in campus matters, with the administration previously freezing university funding, questioning leadership decisions, and scrutinizing campus protests nationwide. Civil liberties groups, including the ACLU, warned that aggressive federal investigations may chill dissent and undermine academic freedom.