



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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New York Democrats in the Legislature Remain Silent on Columbia and College Campuses supporting pro Hamas Protests

JACK M. MARTINS May 8, 2024

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Republican Members of the State Senate double down and call for accountability and consequences for Antisemitic Protests and commend NYPD officials for restoring law and order **Manhattan, NY** - Today, **Senators Jack Martins, Bill Weber, and Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, all members of the Senate Republican Antisemitism Working Group**, joined community supporters in front of Columbia University to call on President Minouche Shafik to testify before a joint meeting of the New York State Senate Higher Education and Government Operations Committees regarding the endangerment of Jewish students on the University's campus. The Senators also called on their colleagues in the Senate Legislature to demand accountability from Columbia by joining their call for such testimony.

On Wednesday, **Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt** and his colleagues sent a **letter** to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Higher Education Committee Chair Toby Stavisky, and Investigations and Government Operations Chair James Skoufis calling for President Shafik to appear before a joint meeting of the Higher Education and Investigations and Government Operations committees to ensure the safety of all students on campus, present her plan of action to defuse future pro-Hamas protests, and discuss lessons that Columbia's leaders have learned in the wake of the bedlam of these past several weeks.

Instead of a strong show of support for Jewish students, New York State Senate Democratic leaders have remained silent regarding pro-Hamas protests at Columbia University, as well as on SUNY and CUNY campuses and institutions of higher learning throughout the nation. Some Democratic leaders have even expressed support for the protesters.

These protests showcased vile and morally repugnant conduct by students who participated, including explicit expressions of support for violent terrorists, hate speech and bigotry of the worst kind against Jews including calls for Jews to be killed, harassment and intimidation of their classmates, destruction of campus property, burglary and forcible takeover of campus buildings, and physical attacks on police officers. The Columbia protests supported the very groups that perpetrated the horrifying attacks of October 7, 2023. Chants heard at Columbia over the past week included, "We are Hamas," "Hamas, make us proud," and "Kill another soldier now." These are not peaceful protests, they are abhorrent to our foundational principles as Americans, and every single member of the State Legislature needs to call them out.

"Our universities have failed our students and must be held accountable. Not only have they failed them academically but have wholly failed to protect their safety and well-being in the face of clear domestic terrorism on campuses. There is no negotiating with terrorists and certainly no hiding behind first amendment rights that don't apply. There is no first amendment right to assault and harass students on campuses and no first amendment right to violent antisemitism. These attacks are funded and organized by outside forces, using university students as unwitting pawns- shame on these university administrators and faculty that have so clearly failed these students," **said Senator Jack Martins, Chair of the Antisemitism Working Group.**

"The atrocities committed on October 7th by the Hamas terror organization were horrific and the worst attack against the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Since then, what has

occurred on college campuses in New York State and throughout the country has only compounded the tragedy. The illegal encampment at Columbia University should've been dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Instead, we've seen vandalism, lawlessness, and hatred toward Jewish students. Today, I joined my Senate colleagues on the right side of this issue, calling for hearings to determine why this was allowed to happen and ensure that it won't be tolerated from here on in. We also spoke in unison to commend the NYPD for their professionalism and bravery during these trying times, with a joint promise never to defund them," **said Senator Bill Weber, representing 38th Senate District.**

"The ongoing tolerance of blatant antisemitism and other forms of hateful language on college campuses, coupled with the lack of decisive action from administrators, is deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Every student has the right to a safe and inclusive learning environment, free from hateful rhetoric. University leaders and faculty bear a responsibility to actively combat such behavior and protect the well-being of their students. It is imperative that they are held accountable for any failure to do so," said **Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, representing 9th Senate District.**

"Weeks of silence and inaction on the part of Columbia's administration allowed their campus to become an ideological war zone where hate, the incitement of violence, and the celebration and glorification of acts of terrorism and organizations that promote them was permitted to take root and flourish, putting the physical and emotional safety of students, faculty and citizens at risk. It is imperative that Columbia's president appear before the Higher Education and Investigations Committees to explain herself and provide a roadmap for resolving this crisis and concrete steps toward ensuring that quality education in a safe environment for all is Columbia's enduring legacy rather than that of a hotbed of intolerance, hate and chaos," **said Senator Rhoads, representing 5th Senate District.**

“It's time to hold people accountable for their failure of leadership. This type of neglect would never happen to any other group of students. All forms of hate should be strongly condemned by those in charge of keeping students safe, and Jewish students cannot be an exception to the standard. It's time to start including Jewish students in the conversation and not turn a blind eye in the face of hatred. Silence is complicity, and evil thrives when people do not strongly fight it,” **closed Emily Austin, journalist, social media influencer and independent NBA Broadcaster.**