



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senate Republicans Call On Democratic Committee Chairs To Demand Answers From Columbia University President Minouche Shafik

ROBERT G. ORTT May 1, 2024

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Today, **Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt**, **Senator Tom O'Mara**, ranking member of the **Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations**, **Senator Joseph Griffo**, ranking member of the **Senate Higher Education Committee** and **Senator Jack Martins**, **Chair of the Senate Republican Working Group on Antisemitism**, along with Republican members of the committees, called for **Columbia University President Minouche Shafik** to appear before a joint

meeting of the Higher Education and Investigations and Government Operations committees to present her plan of action to defuse pro-Hamas protests and ensure the safety of all students on campus.

In a [letter](#) addressed to **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**, **Higher Education Committee Chair Toby Stavisky**, and **Investigations and Government Operations Chair James Skoufis**, the Senators request that the University President be called to appear pursuant to [Senate Rule VII, Section 2](#).

“It’s crucial that the Senate take action to address the abysmal failure of leadership to ensure a safe environment and campus and ensure the safety of Jewish students. President Shafik must provide answers and inform the Legislature of her plan going forward to put an end to these violent, anti-Jewish protests and hold those students who are participating accountable,” **said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt**.

“The lack of action by Columbia University to address violent pro-Hamas protests endangering the safety of Jewish students and to provide a safe campus for everyone is disturbing. The State Legislature has a responsibility to determine why the university's leadership has failed to take immediate, unequivocal, and strong action against these radical extremists who have effectively shut down the institution. The ongoing and growing anti-Jewish, anti-American hatred and violence that has placed Jewish students and faculty at risk cannot be negotiated with or tolerated any longer,” **said Senator Thomas O’Mara, ranking member of the Investigations and Government Operations Committee**.

“I continue to be appalled by the pro-Hamas protests and antisemitism that is occurring on the campus of Columbia University. It is clear that the university's administration is not capable of effectively handling this ongoing situation. While freedom of speech is valued, hate speech is condemnable and unacceptable. A joint hearing of the Education and

Investigations and Government Operations committees would allow us to hear directly from the administration regarding these protests and how the university plans to keep students, faculty and staff on campus safe,” **said Senator Joe Griffo, ranking member of Higher Education Committee.**

“There is no moral equivalency on this. Our student’s safety must remain the #1 priority. “Negotiating” on issues such as these are wrong. At a time when antisemitism is spiking, we need to combat this issue head on. It is time for our higher education administrators to protect all our students. This level of hate and discrimination has no place in New York State. We must put an end to this now,” **said Senator Jack Martins, Chair of the Senate Republican Antisemitism Working Group.**

“As protests at Columbia University were occurring, Ms. Shafik was testifying in front of Congress to address questions of antisemitism and how the University has responded to **conflicts on the campus** regarding the Israel-Hamas war. In her testimony, she claimed that she is committed to doing everything she can on her campus to confront this issue directly. Despite her recent statements, up until this point and in the midst of the current chaos on the campus, Ms. Shafik and her Administration continue to take few to no active steps on putting an end to this ongoing situation...We need clear definitive answers on what Ms. Shafik is doing to diffuse this situation and ensure the safety of Columbia University’s students,” **the letter reads.**

A copy of the full letter is attached.