



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rachel May

Senator May's Statement on Racist Incidents at Syracuse University

RACHEL MAY November 20, 2019

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Senator May's statement on the racist incidents at Syracuse University

“The events of the past two weeks have shaken our community. Anonymous hate speech, physical harassment of people of color, and the white supremacist AirDrop have resulted in a pervasive sense of fear and vulnerability, just as they were intended to do. However, they have also resulted in extraordinary, transformative action by a diverse and passionate group of students, who have come together to demand not just immediate action to secure their

safety, but long-term changes to the way Syracuse University handles issues of diversity and inclusion that will benefit generations of students to come.

“I have had the opportunity to meet multiple times with the students, and SU should be proud of them. This diverse and united coalition of students have faced hateful attacks, but remain focused on solutions, caring for one another, and the health and wellbeing of the whole SU community. I witnessed a constructive process in which both the students and administration listened carefully to one another. As a result, the student demands and administration response evolved to a point where there are now plans to take real action on many fronts.

“Chancellor Syverud and his team have responded positively and in detail to the demands put forward by the student protestors. I applaud this development. Their thoughtful demands merited equally thoughtful responses, and the University appears willing to undertake measures that will materially improve the climate for diversity and inclusion on campus. They will also enhance the curriculum and the student experience at SU. Moreover, I hope that they will help to restore trust between the students and those whose job it is to assure their welfare. The University must be committed and forthright in its implementation of its promises, and must remain committed to fully engaging with the student body.

“True change only comes from sustained action, a labor I hope and trust the Chancellor and Board of Trustees take seriously. Now it is the task of all of us in the greater community to do the hard work of combating racism and bigotry in all forms, so that similar cowardly acts are not repeated and everyone feels safe and welcome here.”

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