

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



May 1, 2024

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
New York State Capitol, Rm. 330
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky
Chair, Higher Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 913
Albany, NY 12247

Senator James Skoufis
Chair, Investigations & Government Operations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 815
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senator Stavisky and Senator Skoufis:

As you know, there has been a rise in antisemitism across our state following the horrifying attacks on October 7th. We have seen and continue to see Jewish New Yorkers targeted by violent protestors, including those on our college campuses.

Most recently, two weeks ago, pro-Hamas protests started at Columbia University. Despite the un-American behavior against Jewish students and the fact that Hamas is a listed terrorist organization as identified by the United States Department of State, the University's Administration has taken little to no action.

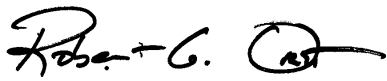
Instead, the President of the University, Minouche Shafik, issued a statement in which she stated she hopes "everyone can take a deep breath, show compassion, and work together to rebuild the ties that bind us together." She then announced that students should stay home for the rest of the semester with classes to be held virtually. She has since stated that educators and student organizers have been unable to reach an agreement to end these protests. It is unacceptable that educators and administrators are negotiating with terrorist sympathizers.

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.

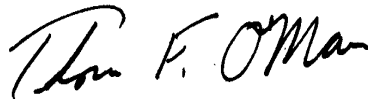
For this reason, pursuant to Senate Rule VII, Section 2, we respectfully ask that you call Ms. Shafik to present before a joint Higher Education and Investigations and Government Operations committee meeting. We need clear definitive answers on what Ms. Shafik is doing to diffuse this situation and ensure the safety of Columbia University's students.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and we look forward to your response.

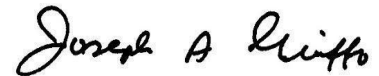
Sincerely,



Robert G. Ort
Senate Minority Leader
62nd District



Senator Tom O'Mara
58th District



Senator Joseph Griffo
53rd District



Senator Jack M. Martins
7th District



Senator Dean Murray
3d District



Senator Peter Oberacker
51st District



Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick
9th District



Senator Anthony Palumbo
1st District



Senator William Weber
38th District