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March 18th, 2022

The Honorable Toby Ann Stavisky
Chair, Senate Higher Education Committee
Room 913, LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stavisky:

I write respectfully requesting the Senate Higher Education Committee conduct a hearing concerning current practices for invitation of guest speakers on State University of New York (SUNY) campuses.

As you may know, Jalil Abdul Muntaqim - previously known as Anthony Bottom – was convicted in 1974 of two counts of first-degree murder of two brave members of the NYPD. He was recently invited to speak on the campus of SUNY Brockport on April 6th, 2022 following being paroled in 2020. While the President of SUNY Brockport – Heidi Macperson – maintains that they do not endorse his views while simultaneously stating that he should have a forum to discuss why he identifies himself as a “former political prisoner.” It is extremely concerning that a taxpayer funded institution such as SUNY Brockport is giving this individual a platform to discuss his views and experiences without any context, and it opens other questions about what practices are being employed at other SUNY institutions with respect to guest speakers.

I have deep concerns regarding the possibility of convicted killers of police officers speaking on SUNY campuses not only as a State Senator but also as the mother of a SUNY student. I am a strong believer in our First Amendment and the right to freedom of speech, but I also believe there is a time and place for everything; I do not believe exposing our SUNY students to the views of a convicted murderer is a responsible use of State-funded resources. Accordingly, Madam Chair, I once again request that the Higher Education committee hold a hearing regarding current SUNY campus guest speaker policies.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daphne V. Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daphne Jordan
Senator, 43rd District