



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

June 1, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

We write to convey our serious concerns regarding what appears to be the radical politicization of higher education in New York State, in the wake of the disturbing and clearly ongoing problems related to both the City University of New York (CUNY) and the State University of New York (SUNY).

The freedom of thought, inquiry and expression at our institutions of higher education is a value that most Americans hold dear. However, we are deeply troubled by what appears to be a misguided and potentially destructive shift toward enabling, embracing and even celebrating radical, intolerant and hate-filled political viewpoints on our CUNY and SUNY campuses.

In particular, there have been repeated episodes that promote anti-Israel, anti-cop, anti-law and order, and anti-US viewpoints and philosophies that are clearly inappropriate for any credible institution of higher learning — and particularly ones that are funded with the taxpayer dollars of hardworking New Yorkers. At the same time, there have also been incidents involving the intimidation of those who might espouse alternative or more “conservative” viewpoints.

The troubling incidents include the following:

- Fatima Mousa Mohammed’s recent speech at the CUNY Law graduation, in which she called the NYPD “fascist” and insisted that “the law is a manifestation of white supremacy,” and part of a system “created to feed an empire with a ravenous appetite for destruction and violence.”
- Hunter College Professor Shellyne Rodriguez, who recently accosted students who were seeking to share pro-life pamphlets on campus, before she violently threatened and chased a NY Post reporter with a machete.

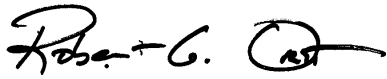
- The April, 2023 incident at the State University of New York at Albany where a student forum was disrupted by unruly protestors who objected to the presence of a conservative speaker.
- The CUNY Law School Faculty Council's approval of an anti-Israel resolution supporting the pro-Palestinian boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. The professors voted to endorse the BDS resolution that previously passed the CUNY Law Student Government Association.
- A SUNY Brockport Professor who invited convicted cop-killer Jalil Muntaqim to participate in a forum on campus. Muntaqim (previously known as Anthony Bottom) was convicted during the 1970s in the brutal murder of two police officers.
- In 2022, the CUNY law school graduation speaker was Nerdeen Kiswani, a high-profile activist whose anti-semitic stances are well known, and who once said, "I hope that a *pop-pop* is the last noise that some Zionists hear in their lifetime."
- Alexei Saab, an adjunct lecturer at Baruch College's Zicklin School of Business, who was convicted in 2022 for providing the terrorist group Hezbollah with potential terror attack location intelligence related to the Port Authority, the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, Grand Central Terminal, the New York Stock Exchange and the city's two airports.
- Michael Issacson, a John Jay professor who tweeted about teaching "future dead cops."

Our colleges and universities should be places of learning, not political indoctrination. Regrettably, the sheer number of these recent incidents provides a strong indication that the current CUNY and SUNY administrations, as well as the CUNY and SUNY Boards of Trustees, are clearly failing in their responsibilities, both to students and to New York taxpayers.

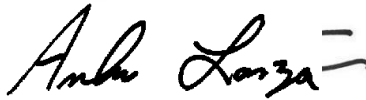
With this in mind, we are calling on you as the New York Governor, the elected official who appoints the majority of the CUNY and SUNY Trustees, to immediately speak out and condemn the intolerant, hateful, and inflammatory rhetoric taking place on our college campuses. We also request you immediately withhold taxpayer funding from any SUNY and CUNY campus that in any way supports, condones or allows hateful, anti-semitic and intolerant speech to take place, and to seek the resignation and replacement of any college employee or administrator involved in such incidents.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this critically important issue, and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



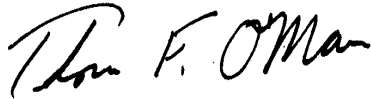
Robert G. Ort
Senate Minority Leader
62nd District



Senator Andrew Lanza
24th District



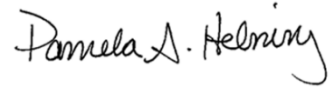
Senator Peter Oberacker
51st District



Senator Tom O'Mara
58th District



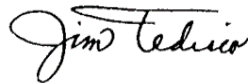
Senator Anthony Palumbo
1st District



Senator Pam Helming
54th District



Senator George Borrello
57th District



Senator Jim Tedisco
44th District



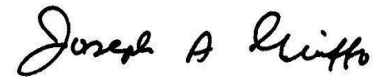
Senator Daniel G. Stec
45th District



Senator Patrick Gallivan
60th District



Senator Alexis Weik
8th District



Senator Joseph Griffo
53rd District



Senator Mario Mattera
2nd District



Senator Mark Walczyk
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Senator Jack M. Martins
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