



**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Hearing: “Columbia in Crisis: Columbia University’s Response to Antisemitism”
April 17, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

Since October 7, this Committee and the nation have watched in horror as so many of our college campuses, particularly the most expensive, so-called elite schools, have erupted into hotbeds of antisemitism and hate.

Dr. Shafik, Mr. Schizer, Ms. Shipman, and Mr. Greenwald, you are here testifying today because Columbia University is one of the worst of those hotbeds and we have seen far too little, far too late done to counter that and protect students and staff. Columbia stands guilty of gross negligence at best and at worst has become a platform for those supporting terrorism and violence against the Jewish people.

For example, just four days after the harrowing October 7 attack, a former Columbia undergraduate beat an Israeli student with a stick while shouting racial epithets.

The following day, a crowd of anti-Israel protestors marched on the university’s Kraft Center for Jewish Life, causing the building to be locked down and forcing Jewish students to shelter inside.

More recently, on March 24, anti-Israel groups hosted a “Resistance 101” event in a Columbia dorm featuring speakers linked to U.S. and Israel-designated foreign terrorist organizations, including the PFLP. Speakers explicitly endorsed terrorism and called on students to support it. This unauthorized event was nevertheless promoted by Columbia faculty and staff.

That a taxpayer funded institution would become a forum for the promotion of terrorism raises serious questions.

Moreover, Columbia administrators have repeatedly failed in their duty to protect Jewish students from this hateful, retrograde form of discrimination.

Don't take my word for it. In February, Columbia undergraduate Eden Yadegar told the Committee, "It is impossible to exist as a Jewish student at Columbia without running face first into antisemitism every single day. Jew-hatred is so deeply embedded into campus culture, that it has become casual and palatable among students and faculty and neglected by administrators."

Let me repeat: neglected by administrators.

Eden and some of her fellow Jewish classmates are in attendance today. I believe they deserve direct and clear answers about how you will address their concerns.

I need not remind you that this is not just a moral duty, but a legal duty set forth in Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*.

Finally, as the Committee convenes today to conduct its solemn oversight duty of postsecondary education, I can confidently say that never has this duty been more important.

The raw, visceral reaction of the nation to the unveiling of antisemitism at so-called elite institutions is indicative of the growing disconnect between the people and those universities. This is evinced by a general loss of public trust and faith in postsecondary education.

We are headed down a dark path if we cannot agree on basic shared moral values, such as the implication of calls for genocide. Bright lines must be drawn before the reputational damage to American universities is endemic and intractable.

With today's hearing, I hope to draw those bright lines. This is an opportunity for each of you to address the public directly and explain your stance on one of the great moral issues of our time.

Antisemitism must have no safe harbor in American universities.