

**Testimony of**  
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**before the**  
**Committee on Education and Workforce**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
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Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and esteemed Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on an issue that demands the urgent attention of every institution of higher learning—combating the alarming rise of antisemitism on college campuses and across the United States. I am Robert M. Groves, Interim President of Georgetown University. As a leader of the nation's oldest Catholic and Jesuit university, I am here to reaffirm our unequivocal commitment to ensuring that our campus is a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all students—including our Jewish students.

Jewish students at Georgetown must feel safe. The university must assure their safety. Our Jewish Life activities must nurture their own spiritual development. They must feel free to forward their perspectives in classes and co-curricular events.

This hearing focuses on the Jewish community at Georgetown and that is the focus of my remarks. I could offer very similar testimony for the Muslim, Protestant, Buddhist, Greek Orthodox, Sikh and other Georgetown faith communities.

I am proud that, since October 7, 2023, Georgetown has experienced no violence, no encampments, no cancelations of commencements, and no DC police actions on campus.

This testimony attempts to describe the faith-based environment that promotes inter-group respect and dialogue, which, I believe, has helped us avoid those events. We have tried to learn from events and alter our practices, while living our Catholic and Jesuit principles.

### **1. Georgetown's Catholic and Jesuit Mission Cannot be Fulfilled in the Presence of Antisemitism**

The Society of Jesus – commonly referred to as the Jesuits – was founded as a religious order of the Catholic Church by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in 1540. From their very beginning, the Jesuits' particular focus has been on education and service to the poor. Since the 16th century, the Jesuits have traveled to almost every corner of the world to establish schools, forming the characters of young people “for the greater glory of God” and for the common good of humanity.

In 1787, Bishop John Carroll proposed to establish Georgetown in the State of Maryland on land that in 1790 became part of the District of Columbia. Unlike other states at the time, Maryland was uniquely open to Catholics and members of other faiths. Sensing the spirit of the new nation, Carroll stated that Georgetown would “be open to students of every religious profession.”

The 1791 passage of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution established freedom of religion for our new nation, providing federal legal protection for Georgetown's support of multiple religions. Since that time, and especially in the last century, the Catholic Church has asked the Jesuits to be on the front line of global interreligious collaboration – to, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, promote the spiritual and moral goods found in other religions as a way to work towards a world of peace, liberty, and social justice.

In 1986, Pope John Paul II said to those assembled in a synagogue he visited and, therefore, to all Jewish people: “You are our dearly beloved brothers, and in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers.”

In his 2013 apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* (*On the Joy of the Gospel*), Pope Francis wrote:

“We hold the Jewish people in special regard because their covenant with God has never been revoked, for ‘the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable’ (Rom 11:29). The Church, which shares with Jews an important part of the sacred Scriptures, looks upon the people of the covenant and their faith as one of the sacred roots of her own Christian identity (cf. Rom 11:16-18).”

Also in 2013, Pope Francis, himself a Jesuit, encouraged the Jesuit Order with these words:

“The first word is ‘dialogue’: ‘Your fidelity to the Church still needs to be uncompromising ... But your main task is not to build walls, but to build bridges which establish dialogue with all peoples, even those who do not share the Christian faith.’”

Most recently, during his first homily on May 18, 2025, Pope Leo XIV proclaimed:

“We are called to offer God’s love to everyone, in order to achieve that unity which does not cancel out differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people.”

To Georgetown, these words are instructions that define our practices. The message is direct – antisemitism is antithetical to our mission.

### ***1.1 How Dialogue Across Differences Animates the Jesuit Mission***

From this, Georgetown’s mission has been forged:

“Established in 1789 in the spirit of the new republic, the university was founded on the principle that serious and sustained discourse among people of different faiths, cultures, and beliefs promotes intellectual, ethical and spiritual understanding.”

Our Catholic beliefs and Jesuit values direct us to respect the human dignity of all persons, to learn from them in collaboration, and through that, to become closer to God. The outcome Georgetown seeks is the creation of generation after generation of value-centered “people for others.” We do this as a university, with all the academic rigor necessary for intellectual growth through critical review of alternatives, but devoted to doing it with religious values in mind.

To achieve successful dialogue among groups Georgetown must have:

- diversity of thought across individuals
- mutual respect, promoting listening by all parties
- freedom to speak one’s views, without fear
- openness to considering new perspectives

Any feature of the campus environment that threatens these violates the Catholic and Jesuit values that determine our practices. The Catholic Church has asked the Jesuits to learn from other religions with full acknowledgement that knowing the differences and similarities among them can bring us closer to God. This is Georgetown’s mission in building what the Jesuits call “people for others.”

Hence, we seek a university culture that discourages any rhetoric that “talks down” to others, that conveys that they don’t belong as full members of the Georgetown community. Certainly *hateful* rhetoric must be eliminated. But even *hurtful* rhetoric can stifle dialogue and mutual understanding. It threatens the nurturance of people for others. Antisemitism, as hate toward Jewish people, threatens Georgetown’s Jesuit mission.

## **2. Georgetown Condemns Hate and Violence**

Georgetown has been vocal in its condemnation of the horrific terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023. The very next day, on October 8, 2023, Georgetown was one of the first universities to issue an immediate and public condemnation in a broadcast email to the entire University community, stating:

“The impact of the tragic events of these past hours have shaken us all. This unprecedented terrorist act, on the Jewish Sabbath, has impacted countless innocent lives. ... In this moment of grief and sorrow, our prayers go immediately to the families and loved ones of those killed, injured, and taken hostage.”

Such statements are not symbolic – they are necessary to reaffirm communal norms and offer moral clarity in times of crisis.

Later, on March 29, 2024, the Jesuits issued the statement:

“Engaged for decades in the communities and societies of the Middle East, we, as Jesuits, want to say that it need not be this way. The choice of death over life, vengeance over reconciliation, wrongdoing over justice, self-interest over relationship, violence over dialogue is a choice and not fated destiny. There are other choices that could be made.”

On March 31, 2024, Pope Francis said,

“I appeal once again that access to humanitarian aid be ensured to Gaza, and call once more for the prompt release of the hostages seized on October 7 and for an immediate ceasefire in the Strip.”

The next day, on April 1, 2024, Georgetown released a statement,

“This is a moment that demands we look for these other choices. In the Middle East, it begins with access to humanitarian aid, the return of the hostages, and an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. And we must recognize that so much more will be required if we can support the choices of ‘life...reconciliation...justice...relationship...dialogue.’ These are vital issues we must address to achieve lasting peace.”

Georgetown’s Catholic and Jesuit mission demands deep reverence for the dignity of all human life. It will continue to speak out against events that threaten that dignity when they touch our community.

## **3. Georgetown’s Large Staff of Religious Leaders Nurtures Student Belonging**

Over the years, to fulfill the mission of interfaith, inter-group, inter-culture dialogue, Georgetown has built up a full-time staff of religious leaders:

- Since 1968, a full-time Rabbi – the first Catholic university in the United States to have a full-time Rabbi and director of Jewish Life
- A community of 17 Jesuit priests, serving not only in chaplaincy work but teaching and administration; one of whom will be Doha-based in fall 2025
- Since 1999, a Muslim Imam
- Three Protestant ministers
- A chaplain from the Eastern Orthodox Church
- A Director of Dharmic Life and Hindu advisor
- In residence halls, residential ministers who live among the students.

The Vice President of Mission and Ministry, Fr. Mark Bosco, S.J., reports directly to the President. The President's office meets routinely with Jewish student leaders, visits the Makom (the home for Jewish Life on campus) for special events, shares Shabbat dinners, and supports the Center for Jewish Civilization events. (It maintains similar ongoing connections with Georgetown's Muslim community.)

The staff is empowered by a large variety of sacred spaces to support the religious practices of multiple faiths: the Jewish Makom and kosher kitchen, the Copley Crypt chapel for Orthodox Christian students, Dahlgren Chapel, an ecumenical chapel, the John Main Center for Christian Contemplation, and the Masjid for Muslim students. Off campus, in Virginia, about an hour west of Washington, D.C., the Calcagnini Contemplative Center is a 55-acre facility for overnight student retreats, almost constantly in use.

Interreligious dialogue is built into the core curriculum – each undergraduate takes two courses in theology and two courses in philosophy. It is, therefore, built into the heart of every student. The grounding in academic treatment enhances the students' openness to extracurricular ministry activities, such as religious services on campuses, student clubs (e.g., Jewish Student Association, Latter Day Saints Student Association).

These investments in the largest university full-time multifaith staff of religious leaders gave Georgetown resources to foster continuing dialogue in the deeply fractious times after October 7. They consoled students feeling isolated; they nurtured the strength coming from renewed faith; they helped students process the complexities of the moment.

### ***3.1 Georgetown Aspires to Active Jewish Community Nurturance***

Today, the Office of Jewish Life within our Office of Campus Ministry includes multiple staff members who serve as spiritual, educational, and pastoral resources for our students. They lead religious services; organize special events and activities on campus to build community among Jewish students, faculty, and staff and engage the broader campus community; and offer one-on-one rabbinic support for students. Our sacred space, Makom, hosts weekly Shabbat services and holiday celebrations. For more than four decades, Georgetown has hosted High Holy Day services that are open to the entire DC-area Jewish community in our largest and most prominent venue on campus, Gaston Hall.

Georgetown maintains a web page specifically dedicated to requesting religious accommodations, with detailed information and a link to the accommodations request form. Georgetown University maintains a Policy on Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Religion and National Origin. As set forth in that policy, the University is sensitive to the diverse religious practices and observances of its current and prospective employees. It is the University's

practice to provide a consistent and methodical approach in addressing requests for reasonable accommodations based on sincerely held religious beliefs.

Jewish students, like all students at Georgetown, are not required to take exams on major religious holidays. Georgetown maintains a Policy on Student Observance of Religious Holidays, and the University Registrar sends a reminder message to faculty at the beginning of each semester about this policy.

Georgetown maintains an online calendar of holy days across faith traditions, including Jewish holidays, and promotes religious services through University newsletters, social media, and other communication channels.

Georgetown aspires to build an environment where each Jewish student can explore more deeply their faith and grow in its richness. We want Jewish students to fully participate in inter-religious dialogue. They can do this only with a feeling of belonging. Antisemitism threatens that sense of belonging. It cannot be tolerated within the Georgetown mission. Georgetown believes the same statements apply to all students, regardless of their religious or non-religious background.

While all these resources built over decades at Georgetown are valuable to building a united culture, world events impinge on our population of students and faculty. We do not always successfully build a welcoming environment for all, but we keep trying, consistent with our Jesuit animation.

#### **4. Years Ago Georgetown Built Structures in the University to Promote Collaboration Across Religious Beliefs**

While Georgetown's Catholic and Jesuit animation sustains a devoted staff of faith leaders, it also attempts to integrate such values into educational and research units. In the fraught environment post the October 7th Hamas attack, these units have offered important intellectual resources to help students, staff, and faculty support one another.

In 2003, we began to build what is now our Center for Jewish Civilization, with leadership from Georgetown's first Rabbi, Harold White. The Center produces, advances, promotes, and disseminates cutting-edge scholarship on Jewish Civilization. It offers about 60 courses, reaching nearly 1,000 students every academic year. These courses have been key in teaching our students about the Holocaust, the history of the Middle East and the political role of Israel, and the modern Hebrew language. It is the home of an undergraduate minor in Jewish Civilization, pursued by students from many faith traditions. It sponsors faculty, staff, and student visits to Israel and the Middle East.

In 2006, the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs began its work promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in the service of peace. Some of its recent activities include a set of meetings on Christian-Jewish relations.

In 1993, the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding was established to build bridges of mutual understanding between the Muslim world and the West and to enhance understanding of Muslims in the West. This Center has studied Islamophobia through a variety of methods. With Christian and Muslim adherents forming more than half of the world's population, its mission notes the fate of the world depends on whether the two groups are in conflict or are in

cooperation. Its scholarship has explored relations between Christian precepts and those of Islam.

The Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life, launched in 2013, promotes civil and substantive dialogue on Catholic social thought and national and global issues; builds bridges across political, religious, and ideological lines; and encourages a new generation of Catholic lay leaders to see their faith as an asset in pursuing the common good. Most recently, the Initiative mounted a dialogue, “Blessed are the Peacemakers,” about the religious resources that support perspectives on peace in the Middle East and other war-torn areas. In fall 2025, Georgetown will host a conference celebrating the anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the encyclical launching the new era of Jewish-Catholic collaboration.

Because of faculty in other programs, we have maintained a rich set of courses spanning multiple disciplines that teach our students the complex history of the Middle East, that delve into the difficult security issues that arise from terrorism, and that build a deeper understanding of the contributions of Jews and Muslims to global civilization as a foundation for combating antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of prejudice.

In addition to faculty and staff units, students guide a set of organizations that support interreligious dialogue.

Georgetown’s Jewish Student Association builds community among Jewish students and those interested in Judaism through a wide array of social, cultural, and holiday programming and offerings. The club sponsors the Jewish Gala (“JGala”), a semi-formal annual celebration—complete with dancing, food, and even a traditional Horah circle—hosted at venues like the National Union Building. It draws both Jewish and non-Jewish students, promoting cultural exchange and unity. During the holidays, the club organizes Shabbat dinners and Sukkot gatherings, centered on cultural appreciation, tradition, and community spirit. There are repeated bagel mornings (“schmooze with the Georgetown Jews”), cultural discussions, mixers, and collaborative programming with groups like the Georgetown Israel Alliance.

The Georgetown Israel Alliance is a student organization that provides a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning the social, political and cultural affairs of Israel. GIA advocates for a two-state solution and encourages dialogue surrounding both domestic and international issues concerning Israel. The organization seeks to raise awareness on campus of Israeli current events and to increase literacy and understanding of Middle East issues.

The Jewish Law Students Association is a community outlet and organization for Jewish students of all backgrounds and beliefs at Georgetown Law. The Association aims to foster members’ expression and exploration of their Jewish identities personally, professionally, culturally, and spiritually. By offering engaging and meaningful programming and by connecting students with other Jewish organizations and alumni, it contributes to the well-being of Jewish students at the Law Center, the broader Georgetown community, and the D.C. Jewish community.

The Georgetown Maimonides Society aims to support and strengthen the Jewish and allied community at Georgetown’s School of Medicine. It hosts meetings, events, dinners, and holiday parties, and supports members in many ways, including connecting students to clergy and faculty, learning opportunities, and services on campus.

The units reviewed above are institutional assets at this time in history, as strong feelings regarding world events intersect with religious beliefs. Since October 7th, the leaders and staff of these units provided safe environments for Jewish people to share their concerns, taught the history of the region, and deepened the spiritual support that they offer to Georgetown students, staff, and faculty.

These centers offer opposing viewpoints. If Georgetown provided a home for only one of them, it would challenge our ability to provide students with access to different perspectives. Focusing only on the output of one of these centers misstates the nature of the intellectual interchanges made possible by all of them being present. Georgetown's support for dialogue lies in their differences.

While these structures are a strength of Georgetown, it's hard work to build bridges across different traditions in order to nurture intellectual and spiritual understanding. Especially after October 7, it demands sustained attention and engagement. We are not perfect, but we persist.

## **5. Georgetown Sustains External Partnerships to Fulfill Its Mission**

Georgetown's work on antisemitism does not happen in isolation. We collaborate with national organizations like the Anti-Defamation League to improve our practices, refine our training, and elevate Jewish student voices. We are very happy that Georgetown recently rose from an overall "D" grade by the Anti-Defamation League to an overall "B" grade, while receiving the highest rating of "Excellent" for the state of Jewish Life on campus. Since that time, Georgetown has addressed some of ADL's critiques. For example, we have explicitly rejected a BDS proposal advanced by a student referendum, explicitly prohibited antisemitism in our anti-discrimination policies, begun mandatory antisemitism education for student leaders and for all incoming students, and clarified speech and expression guidelines, to include a new provision regarding masking and face covering during protests. We recently met with ADL to update on our work, and they have indicated we will get additional credit in our next rating for these actions.

We are maintaining academic and student exchange programs with institutions in Israel, including the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University, which have continued—where safe—despite security challenges. These global partnerships reflect our longstanding conviction that academic boycotts are antithetical to the mission of higher education. As Georgetown stated in 2013:

"A boycott of Israeli universities undermines the academic freedom that is essential to the mission of the Academy .... As an academic institution, it is Georgetown's responsibility to deepen engagement and foster dialogue between scholars and societies to enhance the entire global academic community."

We continue to uphold that principle today. In an April 29, 2025, letter to the university community, in response to a student referendum, I reaffirmed that Georgetown remains opposed to any such boycott:

"At Georgetown, a student referendum provides a sense of the student body's views on an issue. Student referenda, however, do not create university policy and are not binding on the university. ... Georgetown will not implement this referendum, based on our



institutional values and history and existing university resources and processes that address our investments.”

Indeed, we recently announced a new cancer research collaboration between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Georgetown’s Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center to amplify innovation, discovery, and action to end the disease.

Georgetown, as a globally-oriented research university, must inevitably work in environments out of alignment with some aspects of its mission. Our decisions to do so are taken with guarantees regarding academic integrity and support for our students and faculty to work in those environments. Jesuits collaborate whenever possible, even in environments that pose great impediments to such collaboration.

## **6. Georgetown Actively Exports American Education and its Way of Thinking to Other Countries**

From its first years, Georgetown has been globally focused, following the lead of St. Ignatius in the 16th century, sending individual Jesuits throughout the world. Currently, Georgetown has research and/or educational activities in Cameroon, Eswatini, Haiti, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nigeria, Palau, Qatar, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. We also maintain an office in Rome, Italy, to facilitate our work with the Vatican. As Jesuits have done for centuries, Georgetown works on the frontiers, spreading the values-based education and research of our university to populations far away from Washington.

Some of these activities have been funded by U.S. government agencies, some by international organizations, some by U.S.-based private foundations, some by alumni donors in the country, some by agencies connected to the government of the given locale.

For non-U.S. funding we have in place a set of evaluation procedures at the highest level to assure that the activities proposed are consistent with all relevant U.S. laws, ethically appropriate to the Catholic and Jesuit mission of the university, commensurate with our commitments to academic freedom, supportive of our control of personnel under our jurisdiction, and compatible with available Georgetown talent. Such agreements, when they create new academic programs, must be approved by the Board of Directors.

For Georgetown, providing the benefits of Jesuit education and research to populations in other countries is another way for living the goal of “people for others.” It also permits our faculty and students to deepen their sophistication and cultural understanding by working with people quite different from themselves. Indeed, they often confront beliefs and behaviors that challenge, and sometimes even violate, the standards of American society and the precepts of their faiths. As a Jesuit university, we believe that working with someone with conflicting views to yours does not imply that you have been captured by their beliefs. Indeed, gaining a deep understanding of cultures radically different from that of the United States, from Georgetown’s mission perspective, is the first step at building a condition of dialogue. In none of these activities do we tolerate lack of academic freedom, control over admissions, course content, or faculty and staff hiring.

## **6.1 Extending the Jesuit Mission of Georgetown to Qatar**

The non-U.S. educational program with the longest history is Georgetown University, Qatar (GUQ). In 2005, Georgetown established a new campus within Education City (joining other U.S. universities), offering the Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service, using the same required courses as the DC campus. Residing in Doha are full-time Georgetown faculty and staff members to teach and support students who come to GUQ from over 80 different countries in the world. Roughly a third of the students are Qatari citizens. About 70% of the students are female. Indeed, Georgetown is proud of how its Doha campus can offer young women a Western higher education experience. We are educating young people in Doha who could not come to our DC campus.

By contractual obligation, Georgetown maintains full control over GUQ faculty and staff hiring, curriculum and course content, student admissions, and evaluation of all personnel. Hence, the Catholic and Jesuit animation of Georgetown is vibrant at GUQ. There are frequent visits of Georgetown DC faith leaders, with a full-time Jesuit coming in fall 2025. The interreligious dialogue is active, with students there taking two philosophy and two theology courses as part of their curriculum. While we work to fulfill the same mission, our students also fully respect the laws and culture of Qatar. The education in international affairs is enhanced by the many different countries and cultures that are present in our student body.

In 20 years, we have over 1,000 alumni from our Doha campus. Our alumni have gone on to leadership roles in many countries, in diplomacy and foreign affairs, in global firms, in nongovernmental organizations. Through our Executive Master's Degree in Diplomacy and International Affairs, we have educated Qatari diplomats who have gone on to participate in peace negotiations and diplomacy to the benefit of U.S. and global interests. In the spirit of the Jesuits, we believe this is contributing to generational change throughout the region that will help to secure a more peaceful and prosperous world.

The financial model of Georgetown, Qatar is different from that in DC. The Qatar Foundation provides financial support that Georgetown uses to pay the salaries of its faculty and staff in Doha and costs of their use of DC services in IT, HR, and finance. Tuition paid is retained by the Qatar Foundation.

In sum, a global orientation is in the DNA of Georgetown's Jesuit mission. It takes us to many countries, with diverse governments, religions, and cultures. We bring to those countries the Jesuit heritage of education and a Western orientation. We respect the cultures in which we work and follow their laws, but the mission of faith-based dialogue addressing the important questions facing each human and building "people for others" remains constant.

## **7. Georgetown Tries to Act Quickly on Reports of Antisemitism**

In the last few years, the U.S. has seen a dramatic increase in antisemitism and hate crimes toward Jewish people. Since we draw our students largely from the U.S., they enter Georgetown with the effects of this experience. This alone threatens the well-being, safety, and academic freedom of our Jewish students, faculty, and staff and the mission of our university. But at Georgetown, antisemitism must be opposed because it threatens learning and inter-religious dialogue, so central to the Jesuit mission. The same applies to hostilities toward Muslims. Because we are one community, these incidents threaten all of us at Georgetown.

Though there have been protests and commemorative events on campus, they have been conducted peacefully and in accordance with Georgetown's long-standing speech and expression policy which places clear time, place, and manner guidelines on such activities. Those guidelines have been rigorously enforced. No events on campus have been terminated due to disruptions. We are pleased that Georgetown has not experienced encampments, nor has it canceled commencement ceremonies because of protests, nor has it experienced violence on campus, nor has it called the metropolitan police to campus.

However, our practices on campus codified some years ago did not anticipate some of the recent events that have occurred throughout the country.

Since the October 7, 2023, attacks, we have increased security and internal coordination across our campuses. We have worked with affected students and faith groups to ensure they are aware of resources and support services available to them. In particular, we have increased Georgetown University Police Department (GUPD) patrols and security at key spaces on campus, including sacred spaces such as the Makom, our home for Jewish Life, and in public spaces, where much of the student expression activity on campus happens.

We routinely coordinate with the District of Columbia's Metropolitan Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including the regional Joint Terrorism Task Force, to ensure we are aware of any threats to our campus community or the Washington, DC, region.

Georgetown regularly educates the University community about ways in which to report safety and security concerns and seek help.

Georgetown's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies explicitly prohibit targeting individuals based on shared ancestry, ethnic identity, or religion. Post October 7, we added specific language prohibiting antisemitism and Islamophobia. These protections are embedded in our codes of conduct for students, faculty, and staff and reflect our obligations under federal and local law, as well as our moral commitment to justice.

We offer our population multiple ways of reporting potential antisemitic events:

1. Georgetown operates a comprehensive bias reporting system that is accessible to all members of our community. Incidents of antisemitism—like all bias-based conduct—are logged, responded to, and investigated in accordance with university policy.
2. All members of our community can report incidents to the University's office responsible for Title VI compliance (when appropriate) and/or to the Office of Student Conduct (for incidents involving students).
3. All members of our community can report incidents to the Georgetown Police Department.
4. All members of the community can report incidents to our Compliance Helpline, anonymously should they choose.
5. The President's Office meets routinely with the Georgetown Rabbi (and other Georgetown faith leaders) to update on their experiences with pastoral care for our students and staff.
6. The President's Office meets with Jewish students and Jewish faculty (as well as Muslim students) to keep a pulse on the climate on campus more informally.

Any reports obtained through these six means are monitored, analyzed, and responded to by professional staff. Importantly for this hearing's focus, Georgetown provides clear guidance to ensure antisemitic conduct is swiftly addressed.

We publish an annual public report about campus bias incidents that includes aggregate data regarding identity-based incidents, allowing us to identify patterns, hold individuals accountable, and improve our response systems.

Georgetown is committed to supporting the well-being of all members of our community, especially community members who have experienced an act of bias. We provide support and mental and emotional health and well-being resources to community members who report bias incidents.

When there is credible evidence of bias, actions are taken that are commensurate with the offense. It can involve contact restrictions between individuals, moves out of residence halls, and other restrictions for the individual who committed the offense. In some cases, violations of student conduct rules yield suspension or expulsion. In all cases, the intervention involves direct support for the victim of the bias incident.

Dialogue requires multiple parties, free to express their beliefs without fear. Hateful speech that harasses the other induces fear that destroys dialogue and cooperation. Hence, the Georgetown administration speaks out strongly that such behavior harms the community. (Via university-wide communication, we have condemned antisemitic graffiti, threats, and incidents on or near our campus. These acts are not tolerated and are met with public denunciation.)

## **8. Georgetown Has Learned from Earlier Gaps in Reacting to Antisemitism**

Georgetown believes that combating hate must be preventive, not just reactive. As noted, in recognition of these efforts, the Campus Antisemitism Report Card from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) moved Georgetown's grade from a "D" in 2024 to a "B" in 2025.

In the past twenty months, the meetings of senior academic and administrative leaders with Jewish students, faculty, and staff have provided valuable input to how the University can strengthen Jewish life on campus and prevent antisemitism. We have learned from events, to improve practices to improve the campus climate.

As with most universities, our student conduct rules were written before the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023. Since October 7, 2023, and the rise of hate crimes in the country, we have revised several of our proactive, preventive measures and our student conduct sanction processes. We have learned to adapt to new types of activities.

During the 2023-24 academic year, Georgetown launched a public awareness campaign on campus to affirm the University's values; condemn antisemitism, Islamophobia and hatred of any kind; remind community members about the University's policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment and ways to report concerns; and publicize information about safety and security resources and well-being resources available to members of the Georgetown community. A new web page provides a clear central resource directing students, faculty, and staff to the various processes through which they can file complaints of discrimination or harassment, and seek support. Antisemitic discrimination or harassment is explicitly prohibited with unambiguous language.

In January 2025, we launched a new mandatory training for over 700 leaders of all undergraduate and graduate student organizations focused on preventing discrimination and harassment based on religion, race, ethnicity, and shared ancestry. This program includes specific instruction on recognizing and addressing antisemitism—historical and contemporary, overt and subtle. Beginning this August, all incoming first-year undergraduate students will also be required to take this training.

Last summer we launched a formal process to critique our performance in the 2023-24 academic year. This led us to clarify and strengthen our practices regulating the “time, place, manner” of speech on campus. Our rules specify that students may not erect encampments or disrupt academic events. We have clarified the language on those practices.

The annual review of our practices is going on right now in Summer 2025. Our prior guidelines were not explicit about the use of masks preventing us from identifying demonstrators. We’ve recently strengthened enforcement guidelines to prohibit the wearing of masks while engaged in any activity that is unlawful or in violation of university policies on campus. To determine whether someone is a member of the community we request a Georgetown photo identification, which requires visual verification.

In addition, we have written more specific guidelines regarding excessive noise in demonstrations. In the past, Georgetown prohibited amplified sound during demonstrations when it interfered with academic or business operations. We now prohibit all forms of loud expression interfering with any of the ordinary activities of the university.

Prior to October 7, we had guidance that limited who could hang posters and where on campus they could do so. But, like many universities, we discovered that some posters were torn down. Hence, we have explicitly prohibited tearing down flyers or posters. The new guidance specifies that if community members find posters offensive, they should report that to the administration. Further, we have placed campus police in key areas based on the volume of posters.

In short, campus events after October 7 had features that were not well-covered by the then-existing conduct procedures. Georgetown has had to clarify its implementation of conduct principles since that time. Our annual retrospective review is key to this process.

The payoff of careful attention to campus climate and conduct procedures has produced the following: after the application of the conduct procedures, there have been very, very few repeat offenders. But, we acknowledge, we are always learning new ways to support our students and will adopt new practices when possible.

## **9. Georgetown Brings to Campus Prominent Leaders Presenting Diverse Viewpoints**

With our location in Washington, DC, and our University’s long history of engagement in national and international affairs, Georgetown hosts an extraordinary range of events and speakers representing a wide spectrum of ideas and viewpoints. Consistent with our commitment to academic freedom, we provide wide latitude to our programs and centers to host events and invite speakers to campus. While we do not centrally curate the content of events across campus, the wide range of our programs and centers ensures that a diversity of perspectives is available to our students and to the community at large.

This section provides highlights of this environment.

On March 11, 2025, the Georgetown Psaros Center for Financial Markets and Policy hosted an event with House Speaker Mike Johnson. Former Speaker Pro Tempore Patrick McHenry is a Distinguished Fellow at the Center. In 2025 Georgetown's Institute of Politics and Public Service hosted a variety of speakers including White House Chief of Staff, Susie Wiles, and White House Press Secretary, Karoline Leavitt. Georgetown's McCourt School hosted House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries for an event on February 24, 2025, and U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin spoke at an event hosted by Georgetown's Free Speech Project on September 13, 2024. U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel spoke at an event hosted by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security. All of these events proceeded without disruption.

Georgetown's Institute of Politics and Public Policy hosts a high-profile Fellows Program that brings prominent leaders from both sides of the aisle for sustained engagement with our students. The Spring 2025 fellows included Tony Fabrizio (Republican pollster and strategist), Quentin Fulks (Democratic political strategist), Don Graves (former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce), Cecilia Kang (technology and policy journalist), Meg Kinnard (Associated Press political correspondent), and Heather Nauer (former State Department spokesperson and journalist).

Georgetown's Department of Government has offered an annual appointment to a distinguished visiting Israeli professor, which was endowed in 1988 as the Aaron and Cecile Goldman Visiting Israeli Professor. This position helps to serve as an intellectual bridge between Israel and the United States.

In addition, the Georgetown Dialogues Initiative launched during the 2024-25 academic year seeks to give all Georgetown students exposure to and personal experiences in respectful dialogue between persons with opposing viewpoints. The initiative achieves this goal through Signature Events that bring to campus public leaders who discuss their disagreements civilly, without rancor, not debating, but in respectful dialogue. In addition, there are new courses designed to give students interpersonal skills to navigate dialogue across differences.

In 2022, Rabbi Abraham Skorka, a professor of Jewish Studies, and a longtime friend of Pope Francis known for advancing interfaith dialogue among international religious leaders, joined Georgetown as the senior research fellow for Jewish Studies and Jewish-Christian Relations at the University. Rabbi Skorka is contributing to research on Jewish Studies, Jewish-Christian relations, and antisemitism; teaching courses on interfaith engagement; facilitating opportunities for interfaith dialogue on campus; and working to strengthen Jewish life at Georgetown. Rabbi Skorka has led "Jewish-Christian Relations: Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities," a dialogue series involving leading scholars and practitioners in the field. This series is co-sponsored by our Center for Jewish Civilization and Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

## **10. Georgetown Actively Sponsors Events to Support the Jewish Experience**

Our faith-based resources have been proactively addressing key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In May of 2023, before the October 7, 2023, attack, we proactively partnered with national organizations to bring in expert voices. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has provided briefings for senior university leadership. Our School of Medicine runs "Do No Harm," a

dialogue-based training initiative that equips medical students with the tools for navigating complex conversations around identity, ethics, and hate.

Since the tragic Hamas attack on Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent war in Gaza, Georgetown has hosted a wide range of events both to build a deeper understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from different viewpoints and to foster dialogue between them. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, our students took the initiative to bring leaders from all of our relevant research centers together to model civil discourse among opposing perspectives of the conflict. The student-run Georgetown Bipartisan Coalition hosted a panel discussion entitled “Understanding the Conflict in Israel and Gaza,” featuring faculty from the Center for Jewish Civilization, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, and Security Studies Program. The discussion attracted hundreds of students from across campus and was conducted in a constructive atmosphere without disruption.

Georgetown has held several events that brought Israeli and Palestinian voices together in the search for peace. We hosted the Parents Circle – Families Forum, a group of Israeli and Palestinian parents who have lost children due to the ongoing conflict. We partnered with them to host “Listening from the Heart,” to teach students to engage in complex, emotionally charged conversations with empathy and nuance, not hostility and fear.

Our Center for Jewish Civilization hosted an Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding initiative in a session entitled “Working Towards a Shared Future: A Discussion With Peacebuilders From Israel and Palestine” featuring accomplished professionals committed to and working towards a peaceful and shared future for Israelis and Palestinians. Our Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security awarded its highest annual honor to the Israeli organization, Women of the Sun, and the Palestinian organization, Women Wage Peace, for their common efforts at bridging the divide.

In addition to these efforts to promote dialogue and foster peaceful engagement, Georgetown research centers have brought in experts and activists on the Middle East from a variety of different perspectives. In addition to the “Gaza Lecture Series,” which brought a number of high profile Palestinian scholars to campus, our Center for Jewish Civilization and Center for Security Studies also hosted a range of high-profile speakers to discuss the Israeli perspective on the conflict, to examine the dynamics of terrorism in the region, and to explore the roots of increasing antisemitism around the world. Speakers included Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt (the US Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism), Ambassador and Georgetown Faculty Member Dennis Ross (Former US Special Middle East Coordinator), Dr. Shira Efron (the Senior Director of Policy Research at the Israel Policy Forum), Meir Litvak, Goldman (Head of Middle East Studies at Tel Aviv University), Amir Tibon (a Haaretz journalist and October 7<sup>th</sup> survivor), Ira Forman (U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism), Eran Etzion, (former senior Israeli diplomat), Maher Bitar (NSC Senior Director of Intelligence), and Georgetown’s Aaron and Cecile Goldman Visiting Israeli Professor and Israel Institute Fellow, Arie Kacowicz. We also invited senior diplomats from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE to expose our students to the broad range of views within the Arab world.

Georgetown was particularly honored to be the first American university to host representatives of the families of U.S. hostages held by Hamas, which drew hundreds of students to hear first hand of their anguish not only about the absence of their loved ones, but their frustration that the world was not prioritizing their timely release. It was a poignant moment on our campus that

brought together students of all faith traditions in the true spirit of what Jesuits refer to as "people for others."

Collectively, these events exposed our students and our broader community members to the full range of views on the sources and impact of the conflict and the implications for the larger Jewish and Muslim communities. No speakers were banned from our campus based on the substance of their views. Our restrictions on speech arose only when the safety of our population was at risk by the timing, place, or manner of the event.

Surely, a large number of students sought out events from speakers aligned with their existing views of the conflict reinforcing those views. Our responsibility has been to make sure that the full range of views were represented on our campus and to model wherever we could the possibilities for civil dialogue and peacemaking among opposing views (a listing of other events appears in Appendix A). We will continue our efforts in this regard.

## **11. Conclusion**

Georgetown is not perfect. We have confronted issues not anticipated by our original conduct policies. When we encounter unanticipated challenges, we attempt to improve policies and practices. This is never-ending. This is part of the Jesuit model of "discernment," where one prayerfully reflects on the past in order to do better in the future.

With regard to antisemitism, the focus of this hearing, we use dialogue with the Georgetown Rabbi, our Jewish faculty, students, and staff, to learn ways of improving their sense of belonging at Georgetown. We clarify our conduct procedures when needed. We continuously seek to build an environment where all are welcomed for the diversity of thought they offer.

We take some comfort in the fact that we have had no encampment, no violence, no cancelation of commencement ceremonies, no metropolitan police activity on the Georgetown campus. We have successfully had speakers with starkly different viewpoints regarding Middle East issues. We are committed to informed dialogue across differences.

Chairman Walberg and members of the Committee, the fight against hate and antisemitism is ongoing. We at Georgetown are determined to build a campus—and contribute to a society—where all students, including Jewish students, can live, learn, and flourish free from fear.

We do this not merely out of compliance but out of the values that our religious faiths motivate.



## Appendix A

Since the October 7 attacks, Georgetown's academic centers and university offices have hosted a variety of programs and events in response to the ongoing crisis, to provide students with the opportunity to engage a wide variety of views:

- On October 19, 2023, our Center for Jewish Civilization (CJC) hosted an event on "The Israel-Hamas War; How it Began and What Comes Next."
- On November 27, 2023, our Center for Security Studies hosted an event about the "October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel and the ongoing Israeli response."
- On November 30, 2023, the Office of Jewish Life hosted "Bring Them Home: Community Demonstration for the Hostages Still Held Captive by Hamas."
- On January 25, 2024, our Office of Mission and Ministry hosted a dialogue session entitled "Shared Grief, Shared Hope: Bereaved Israelis and Palestinians for Peace" featuring a dialogue with members of the Parents Circle–Families Forum (PCFF).
- On January 31, 2024, the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs hosted an event, "Towards an International Peace Conference in the Aftermath of the Israel-Hamas War," featuring Georgetown's Aaron and Cecile Goldman Visiting Israeli Professor and Israel Institute Fellow, Arie Kacowicz.
- On September 10, 2024, the CJC hosted "Israel's Strategic Dilemmas; Is there a way forward?," a discussion that CJC Director Jonathan Lincoln moderated with Dr. Shira Efron, the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation Senior Director of Policy Research at the Israel Policy Forum, on the war in Gaza, if and how it ends and its implications for Israel's future.
- On September 19, 2024, Dr. Bruce Hoffman, a professor in Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and a national expert on terrorism, moderated a discussion with four family members of U.S. citizens who have been held hostage to discuss their efforts to help get their loved ones released and the prospects for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.
- On October 8, 2024, the CJC hosted "Israeli Society One Year after October 7th," a conversation that CJC Director Lincoln led with Meir Litvak, Goldman Professor and Head of Middle East Studies at Tel Aviv University.
- On October 9, 2024, the CJC hosted a conversation with Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt entitled, "Antisemitism as a Tool for Malign Influence - And Its Effects on Democracy."
- On October 21, 2024, the CJC hosted a conversation with Ambassador Dennis Ross and CJC Director Lincoln on the topic of "An End to the War in Gaza? The Implications of Sinwar's Death."
- On October 29, 2024, the CJC hosted the 2024 Annual Andrew H. Siegal Memorial Lecture, which was delivered by Director Lincoln, on the topic of "Navigating the Internal Divides: Palestinian and Israeli Politics After October 7th."
- On January 16, 2025, the CJC hosted an event on "Israel's Multifaceted Crisis" with Eran Etzion, a former senior Israeli diplomat with more than twenty years of experience in key government positions, to discuss the political and security situation as well as its implications for Israel's domestic politics.
- On February 6, 2025, the CJC hosted "An End to the War?; Unpacking the Gaza Ceasefire," with Amir Tibon, a Haaretz journalist, author, and October 7th survivor, to

discuss the latest developments concerning the ceasefire and hostage release and its broader implications for Israelis and Palestinians.

- On February 25, 2025, the CJC hosted “Working Towards a Shared Future: A Discussion With Peacebuilders From Israel and Palestine” with Hiba Qasas and Kobi Skolnick, two accomplished professionals committed to and working towards a peaceful and shared future for Israelis and Palestinians.
- On April 23, 2025, the CJC and Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs co-hosted a panel discussion on “Jewish-Catholic Relations Post-October 7th.”
- On April 28, 2025, the CJC hosted a conversation on antisemitism with Ira Forman, former U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, and Emily Tamkin, journalist and author.