

Dr. Wendy Raymond, President, Haverford College
Testimony before the
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
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Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, Committee Members: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you. I have served as president of Haverford College for the past six years, and I am honored to represent our community here today. At the outset, I would like to make clear that Haverford condemns, in the strongest possible terms, antisemitism in every form. At Haverford, our Jewish students, staff, faculty, and alumni are deeply valued community members whose presence and contributions are vital to the College. All of our Jewish community members, like all our community members, deserve a Haverford experience that is safe and welcoming, and I look forward to discussing today our approach to these matters.

Haverford College

Haverford is a liberal arts undergraduate college located outside Philadelphia that is committed to academic excellence. We are a small, close-knit campus community of roughly 1,500 talented, motivated, and collaborative undergraduate students for whom Haverford is proud to meet 100% of demonstrated financial need.

Founded in 1833 by a group of Quakers and now non-sectarian, Haverford has always been dedicated to continual learning through critical inquiry and ethical practice. Our distinctive ethos is perhaps best conveyed by the words of former president Isaac Sharpless, who in 1888 implored the graduating class, “I suggest that you preach truth and do righteousness as you have been taught, whereinsoever that teaching may commend itself to your consciences and your judgements. For your consciences and your judgements we have not sought to bind; and see you to it that no other institution, no political party, no social circle, no religious organizations, no pet ambitions put such chains on you as would tempt you to sacrifice one iota of the moral freedom of your consciences or the intellectual freedom of your judgements.”

In that spirit, Haverford today provides a rigorous liberal arts education that encourages freedom of thought, open inquiry, and free expression. We will achieve our educational aim of pursuing truth and knowledge only by expecting and accepting differing perspectives among our community members. In such an environment, deep learning occurs through the consideration of competing ideas. In undertaking that challenging process we expect our community members to take shared responsibility for engaging in reasoned and respectful dialogue, especially when confronted with ideas counter to their own.

Education at Haverford is grounded in the Quaker assumptions of every person’s inherent worth and that intellectual and ethical growth are never complete. As our community confronted the dangers and deep wounds of antisemitism brought to the surface by the horrific attacks of

October 7 and the war in Gaza, our community ethos and intellectual aims have been questioned and tested. It is my role as president to ensure that Haverford itself learns and grows from our recent experiences.

Haverford's Fight Against Antisemitism

Haverford's roots in supporting the Jewish community run deep. A Haverford graduate and board member named Harold Evans played an important role in the founding of the state of Israel. In 1948, he was appointed by the United Nations to be the first Special Municipal Commissioner for Jerusalem in large part because of the trust and respect he had earned from Jews and Arabs alike.

Harold kept his Haverford education with him. Drawing on his Quaker values, he refused military escort and traveled to Jerusalem on his own to assert his belief in peaceful governance. Harold's principled stance in 1948 reflects Haverford's historical and continuing commitment to be a place that values the humanity and worth of each person and strives to make all community members feel safe, welcomed, supported, and inspired to pursue their academic and professional goals.

Since Hamas's terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, our nation has seen a troubling rise in antisemitism. We have also witnessed an increase in anti-Muslim hate and other types of bias. Haverford has not been immune to these challenges, and I want to affirm our commitment to confronting hate and discrimination in all its forms.

This has been a very painful time for many members of our Jewish community and many others. In the days following the attacks, I was inspired by the ways in which the Haverford community came together. I joined students, faculty, staff, and alums in a Quaker peace circle shortly following the attack. I was deeply moved in particular by the brave students, some of whom had deep connections in Israel and Gaza, who expressed their anguish. A month later, when one of our students, a Palestinian-American from the West Bank, was shot while on Thanksgiving holiday in Vermont, community members came together once again to support one another.

Even while community members demonstrated great compassion and support for one another through those trying events, some actions have since occurred on our campus that challenged our values. In December 2023, a non-violent sit-in at Founders Hall persisted until it escalated and began impeding the abilities of students to pursue their studies and of staff and faculty to conduct their work. Once that occurred, we took decisive action, and the sit-in ended. Last year we invited multiple external experts to lead antisemitism workshops on our campus. I was dismayed and disappointed when protestors disrupted the workshop conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Staff took quick action to remove disruptors from the room. Simultaneously, demonstrators who had gathered on the lawn outside created an atmosphere of intimidation, and it took too much time for us to deploy the additional personnel necessary to move them away from the building. The painful irony of the disruption of an educational program about

antisemitism was not lost on me or my many valued colleagues and students in the room, who attended in constructive spirit. Shouting over speakers is counter to our values, and I am grateful that our guests from the ADL had the courage to ultimately finish their presentation. In the aftermath, we conducted a full investigation consistent with our student conduct procedures.

I regret that those demonstrations took the forms they did and had a negative and lasting impact on members of our community. It is our responsibility as college leaders to protect our students from harassment, discrimination, and bias. We have learned from events like these and have strengthened our time, place, and manner policies and procedures. We continue to engage early and directly with any individuals we know to be pursuing activism in order to prevent similar disruptions from occurring in the future.

We stand firmly against antisemitism. Any form of harassment, discrimination, or hate undermines our commitment to being an open and inclusive campus where all are welcome. As such, we have taken a number of concrete steps in the past two years to improve our approach to combating antisemitism:

- **Ad Hoc Committee.** In March 2024, we created the Ad Hoc Committee on the Freedom of Expression, Learning, and Community to examine free expression, antisemitism, and other campus climate issues. Several of the committee’s findings and interim recommendations have already been implemented, including the recent enactment of a revised Interim Policy on Expressive Freedom and Responsibility, which further clarifies expectations around time, place, and manner of expressive freedom. We also took the committee’s suggestion to draft a set of core values to formally articulate what it means to be part of the Haverford community, and the type of campus culture that we collectively aspire to uphold. I look forward to receiving the committee’s final report and full slate of recommendations in June.
- **New Anti-Bias Policy.** We have updated the Haverford anti-bias policy to further clarify that Haverford does not tolerate hate, discrimination, bias, or harassment and to make more visible the College’s expectations and procedures for addressing incidents of discrimination, harassment, and bias, including antisemitism.
- **Revised Expressive Freedom and Responsibility Policy.** We recently overhauled our institutional policy clarifying time, place, and manner guidelines on free expression to better articulate the College’s commitments and each community member’s rights and responsibilities. This includes limiting interruptions of speakers or events, maintaining access to College property for its intended uses, limiting amplified sound to hours that will not disrupt campus life or our academic mission, and establishing greater accountability when individuals violate our policies. Specifically:
 - **Outdoor Spaces.** We have updated our policy on what structures can be erected on Founders Green (central quad) to require that any structure must receive prior

approval and only be available for limited durations of time. College officials will consider health and safety, accessibility, and college operations, and will reserve the right to remove unapproved structures when deemed necessary.

- **Identification.** Any person observed violating our Interim Policy on Expressive Freedom and Responsibility may now be approached by Campus Safety who can request to see a Haverford OneCard or other form of identification. Haverford community members are now required to comply with such requests, including the removal of masks, if applicable, to verify identities.
- **Visual Media.** We clarified that all visual media content, like all forms of expression, are subject to our Interim Policy on Expressive Freedom and Responsibility as well as our Anti-Bias Policy. The revision holds individuals and organizations responsible for any visual media that violate College policies.
- **Strengthened Safety Protocols.** The safety and well-being of the Haverford community is our highest priority. We have increased the presence of Campus Safety personnel at campus events and improved our approach to managing event disruption, including by shifting oversight of our Campus Safety team under the Dean of the College.
 - Campus Safety has increased collaboration with Chabad House advisors to provide additional on-site security for Shabbat dinners and special events, as requested.
 - Campus Safety maintains open communication with our two local law enforcement agencies (Haverford Township and Lower Merion Police Departments) for mutual information-sharing about potentially disruptive activities on campus and in the local community.
- **Honor Code Revisions.** For over 120 years, the Haverford Honor Code has governed student life on campus and holds students accountable to the values upon which our community depends: mutual trust, concern, and respect for oneself, one another, and the community. The Honor Code is in the process of being updated to make clear that harassment, discrimination, and bias are not forms of protected expression, and to emphasize that all our students are welcome on our campus.
- **Student Conduct.** We clarified our student conduct process, making it easier for our community to understand the consequences they may face if they violate our policies.
- **Anti-Doxxing Policy.** We created a college-level anti-doxxing policy to strengthen the protection of members of our community from harassment. This policy covers any personal information shared by others with the intent or knowledge that it may be used to intimidate, threaten, or cause harm.

- **New Title VI Position.** We are hiring a Director of Civil Rights and Title IX Coordinator, responsible for managing the development and implementation of College policies and practices to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements related to equity and non-discrimination, including Title VI, Title VII, and Section 504. The Director will also coordinate educational programs and policies to prevent inequity in education and the College workplace, including identity-based discrimination.
- **Dedicated Programs on Combating Antisemitism.** We launched a year-long initiative in Fall 2024 to encourage critical thinking about and engaging with one another on challenging issues. In Fall 2024, Haverford hosted several talks and panels, workshops, dialogue sessions, and community gatherings, with more than 485 students, faculty, and staff in attendance. There were two community gatherings and vigil spaces on October 6 and 7, hosted by the Jewish Students' Union and the College, respectively; two antisemitism workshops – one offered by the ADL and the other offered by Project Shema; a talk on Antisemitism and Blood Libel in Imperial Russia; and other programs dedicated to dialogue and conflict resolution. Programming continued in Spring 2025 with additional discussions and workshops.
- **Working with External Jewish Groups.** In February, Haverford received a failing grade from the ADL. That is a sobering commentary; I do not believe it fully reflects the current state of our community, and I am committed to improving our standing. We have taken a number of steps that were not reflected in that assessment, such as dedicating resources and programming related to antisemitism. This includes work that has been underway for well over a year, strengthening the kinds of policies and practices the ADL considers in its evaluation. I have been in contact with ADL's president and the Philadelphia regional director. Our teams will explore best practices in ways that I am confident will serve our community well and ultimately remediate the College's current grade on the report card. I look forward to that work. We are having similar, concurrent conversations with colleagues from the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

Importantly, the College has invested in Jewish life on campus and engaged in dialogue with Jewish organizations to better support our Jewish students, faculty, and staff. The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life supports three Jewish student groups on campus. An Affinity Employee Resource Group for Jewish faculty and staff began in 2024.

During the recent Passover holiday, Jewish student groups worked with one another to share kosher kitchen space, plan and manage events, and host a beautiful Seder. Student engagement in Jewish groups has increased this year, with students enjoying opportunities for connection, spiritual growth, and cultural engagement. Hillel's executive director and a rabbinic advisor have been indispensable resources for our Jewish Student Union. Bi-Co Chabad, which offers a setting for strong spiritual development, community connection and pride, and education about Israel and antisemitism, is also thriving with ongoing and new programs, regular Shabbat

dinners, celebrations, presentations, and religious guidance for students at Haverford. The Chabad community has helped bring important events to Haverford, including panels, discussions, and film screenings.

Even as our community benefits from many such academic, social, and spiritual contributions of students, faculty, staff, and friends, and my leadership team has endeavored to support our community throughout the challenges since October 2023, I recognize we have not always succeeded in living out Haverford's ideals. Actions that clearly transgressed our community values have caused deep hurt and division, and these point to larger remedies like those above we must continue to pursue.

Any failures and fractures at Haverford are ultimately my responsibility as president, and it is my commitment to guide our college toward learning, working, and living together in a way that promotes safety for everyone on our campus.

Our Path Ahead

Haverford has always embraced the Quaker principle that intellectual and ethical growth are never complete. In that spirit, we are confronting this moment in history head-on and are humbly committed to forging a better path forward – one in which our deep commitment to academic freedom and free expression is balanced with ensuring our campus is one in which every student can thrive.

In closing, I would like to briefly address the Haverford community directly. It is you, our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, who often lead by informing us of the ways in which we must adapt and evolve in order to teach, mentor, and be in community together. At Haverford, we often talk about the importance of learning and deep reflection. In my own learning and deep reflection, I've gained clarity about the extent to which, under my leadership, we came up short in some areas. To anyone in the Haverford community who felt like we could have done more, or that I didn't take a more assertive role in the face of actions running counter to our values and Honor Code—I hear you and acknowledge that we can do better, and I can do better. To Jewish members of our community who felt as if the College was not there for you, I am sorry that my actions and my leadership let you down. You are welcome at Haverford, and I remain committed to addressing antisemitism, and all issues that harm our community members and undermine our educational mission.

At this unprecedented time in the history of higher education, I am buoyed by the strength of our community. I want you to know that I am committed to making Haverford better every single day. This will take time. This will take effort. I thank you for demonstrating how, together, we can work toward creating a better and more peaceful world. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.