

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 1, 2023

President Martha E. Pollack
300 Day Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear President Pollack:

We write today to express our deep concern and disappointment regarding your institution's silence in condemning the terrorist attack that took place by Hamas on October 7, 2023, against the nation of Israel. The deliberate and indiscriminate firing of rockets and missiles into civilian areas along with the slaughter of women and children is not only a violation of international law but also a grave threat to the lives and well-being of innocent people.

The shocking lack of a **prompt and unequivocal** condemnation from Cornell University on this barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas raises serious concerns about the institution's moral compass and its commitment to standing against terrorism and violence. What Hamas did is pure evil. There is never a defense against terrorism. It is deeply unsettling that a university of Cornell's stature, renowned for its intellectual rigor and leadership in academia, chose to remain silent for so long, leaving a void that speaks volumes about your priorities and values. Silence in this case is resounding applause for the acceptance of evil.

When it has come to large-scale cultural and political events that have affected your campus community in the past, your institution has been prompt and unequivocal in its condemnation of less egregious actions without any hesitation. It is mind-boggling to see how it took your institution several days to condemn a terrorist attack when you have been eager to be a leading voice in world events across academia. Since you've chosen to weigh in on other current events, you have a responsibility to do so here in response to clear threats of violence and antisemitism, particularly given the number of Jewish students attending your university.

Furthermore, disturbing reports indicate that Russell Rickford, a professor at your institution, described the slaughter of innocent Jewish women and children by Hamas as "energizing" and "exhilarating."¹ The fact that individuals employed at your institution are not only endorsing violence and terror but are gleefully celebrating it, is not just a stain on your reputation but a clear indication that your campus might be harboring ideologies that run counter to the principles of your institution's mission statement of striving "to discover, preserve and disseminate knowledge,

¹ <https://cornellsun.com/2023/10/16/cornell-professor-exhilarated-by-hamass-attack-defends-remark/>

to educate the next generation of global citizens, and to promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community.”²

This delay in response and the support of these statements have far-reaching implications. It sends a message of indifference, not just to the victims of this attack but to victims of terrorism globally. It undermines the very essence of education – to foster understanding, empathy, and respect among diverse communities. Cornell’s inaction allows these voices of hate and violence to thrive, casting a shadow over the entire university community.

We implore you to act swiftly and decisively. It is your responsibility to condemn this terrorist attack unequivocally and publicly, disassociate the university from any student organization or professor endorsing violence, and take concrete steps to ensure that such ideologies that support and defend the actions of antisemitism and barbarism find no refuge at Cornell University.

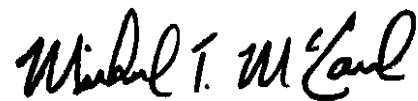
The world is watching, and the credibility and integrity of your institution are at stake. It is not just a matter of issuing a statement; it is about taking a stand against hatred and terrorism and demonstrating that Cornell is a leader in academia and will unequivocally and without reservation denounce the voices and actions of evil.

We eagerly await your immediate and robust response to this deeply troubling situation.

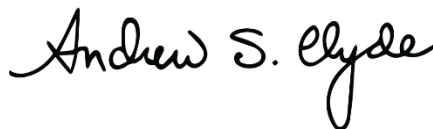
Sincerely,



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Michael McCaul
Member of Congress



Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

² <https://www.cornell.edu/about/mission.cfm>

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

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Glenn Grothman
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Andy Harris
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Doug LaMalfa
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Jack Bergman
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Nancy Mace
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Michael Guest
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Mike Carey
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Doug Lamborn
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Bill Posey
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Chuck Edwards
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Nicole Malliotakis
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Burgess Owens
Member of Congress