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U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

July 8, 2024

Ms. Kathy Hochul
 Governor
 New York
 NYS Capitol Building
 Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs is proud of the success of the GI Bill in providing transitioning active duty servicemembers, veterans, and their beneficiaries access to a quality higher education they need to expand economic opportunities for them and their families. Every year, since 1944, millions of veterans have been able to take advantage of the education benefits the GI Bill offers at colleges and universities across the United States. As you know, the GI Bill has not only helped many individuals who could not otherwise afford higher education pursue an education, but it also has helped build the American middle class.

Congress has the authority under the U.S. Constitution to conduct oversight and that authority is delegated to the Committees of jurisdiction under House of Representatives Rule X. As the Congressional committee with statutory and oversight authority over this important education benefit, we must conduct rigorous oversight over this program to ensure that veterans are receiving the quality education they have earned. Since this program is funded by taxpayers, this Committee has a duty to ensure that the veterans are being well-served by the program and that federal funds are not being utilized in a way that is antithetical to its purpose.

The original 1944 GI Bill included hard-fought religious and racial protections to ensure that all religious and racial minorities could participate in the program, free from bias. However, I am deeply concerned that nearly eighty years later, veterans who have earned these education benefits are being denied the very religious freedoms on college campuses in your state that they fought so hard to protect.

Our country is based on the principal that all Americans are created equal. Yet I fear that Jewish student veterans are not being treated equally. As many of us have witnessed, the protests and rioting on Barnard College, Columbia University, and Cornell University's campuses against the State of Israel and the Jewish race have spiraled to the point of targeting our Jewish student community, including veterans, making it nearly impossible for Jewish students to receive the safe, quality, valuable college education they – regardless of their faith – deserve.

As Governor, I believe it is essential that you direct the State Approving Agency in your state to examine Barnard College, Columbia University, and Cornell University to determine whether recent actions or inactions by the administration and faculty at this university against Jewish students have undermined the ability of the University to provide a safe environment and a quality education through the GI Bill for Jewish student veterans. I would also remind you that the funding for the State Approving Agency comes from an agreement with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

While it is unusual for this Committee to request the review of a specific university, the allegations that this university has created an environment that is undermining the basic civil rights of members of the student veteran population, and have allowed antisemitism to take hold at Barnard College, Columbia University, and Cornell University make this request a necessity. I thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



MIKE BOST
Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Mark Takano, Ranking Member