

REPUBLICANS

MIKE BOST, ILLINOIS, CHAIRMAN
AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, AMERICAN SAMOA
JACK BERGMAN, MICHIGAN
NANCY MACE, SOUTH CAROLINA
MATTHEW M. ROSENDALE, MONTANA
MARIANETTE MILLER-MEEKS, IOWA
GREGORY F. MURPHY, NORTH CAROLINA
SCOTT FRANKLIN, FLORIDA
DERRICK VAN ORDEN, WISCONSIN
MORGAN LUTTRELL, TEXAS
JUAN CISCOMANI, ARIZONA
ELI CRANE, ARIZONA
KEITH SELF, TEXAS
JEN KIGGANS, VIRGINIA

JON CLARK
STAFF DIRECTOR

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

364 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

DEMOCRATS

MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER
JULIA BROWNLEY, CALIFORNIA
MIKE LEVIN, CALIFORNIA
CHRIS PAPPAS, NEW HAMPSHIRE
FRANK J. MRVAN, INDIANA
SHEILA CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, FLORIDA
CHRIS DELUZIO, PENNSYLVANIA
MORGAN MCGARVEY, KENTUCKY
DELIA RAMIREZ, ILLINOIS
GREG LANDSMAN, OHIO
NIKKI BUDZINSKI, ILLINOIS

MATT REEL
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

July 8, 2024

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough:

Since 1944, the GI Bill has helped millions of student veterans and their dependents to receive an education and achieve the American Dream. Through the joint efforts of student veterans, Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and schools around the country, many veterans can use the GI Bill to transition to a new career. However, following an uproar of unrest on college campuses across the country following the October 7th Hamas-led attack on Israel, I am concerned that nearly eighty years later, veterans who have earned these education benefits are being denied the very religious freedoms on college campuses they fought to protect. As you know, the protections against discrimination that are included in Title VI of the Constitution ensure that the GI Bill is available to all veterans, including religious and racial minorities, to ensure that every veteran has access to the education they have earned, on a college campus that is a welcoming place for all.

However, we have seen that many students, including student veterans, are not being afforded these protections on college and university campuses. I am concerned about the impact that recent antisemitic activities on campuses around the country could have on Jewish veterans seeking an education. Protests and rioting on campuses against the State of Israel and the Jewish race have spiraled out of control on many campuses that are receiving millions of dollars in federal funding through the GI Bill. Many of our Jewish student community, including veterans, may feel that their fundamental freedoms are under attack.

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, my Committee has a duty to ensure that the veterans who use it are being well-served by the program and that federal funds are not being utilized in a way that is antithetical to its purpose.

With antisemitic activities having taken place on campuses around the country, please tell me what VA is doing to ensure that schools that are approved to participate in the GI Bill are protecting the rights of Jewish veterans to attend classes and enjoy campus life in a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination. Additionally, as all campuses are approved by a State Approving Agency (SAA) to receive GI Bill funding, the Committee would like to know what actions VA is taking to ensure that schools where antisemitic actions have taken place on campus are being properly investigated by the SAA.

As Secretary, I believe it is essential that you take action to ensure Jewish veterans are treated equally on college campuses across the country. Additionally, if there is evidence that Jewish student veterans or their dependents are disadvantaged because of antisemitic or anti-Israel protests, VA should take action to protect the interests of those students. I trust you understand the significance of this issue as VA was established to principally serve our veterans. Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to a response to this inquiry by **July 30, 2024**.

Sincerely,



MIKE BOST

Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Mark Takano, Ranking Member