



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1403

November 15, 2023

Dr. Pamela Whitten
President, Indiana University
Bryan Hall 200
107 S. Indiana Ave.
Bloomington, IN 47405

Dear President Whitten,

I'm writing to you today regarding the recent resignations of multiple Indiana University (IU) Bloomington students from the Indiana University Student Government (IUSG) over IUSG's failure to combat campus antisemitism.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, launched a brutal and unprovoked terror attack on our ally Israel. Hamas terrorists murdered 1,300 innocents in Israel and kidnapped over two hundred hostages, including nine Americans who are still missing.

Shockingly, in the immediate aftermath of the Hamas attack, pro-terrorist protests broke out on numerous U.S. college campuses, and some universities even faced illegal antisemitic threats and vandalism. A student at Cornell University was arrested after threatening to "shoot up" a kosher dining hall, and an unidentified suspect graffitied slogans praising Hamas terrorists onto a George Washington University library.

On October 9, Chabad and Hillel at IU, two Jewish student groups, organized a demonstration in support of Israel and victims of Hamas terrorism. That same night, the Palestinian Solidarity Committee, another IU student group, held a simultaneous, anti-Israel counter protest. According to IU's student newspaper, at the end of the night the groups of anti-Israel and pro-Israel protestors confronted one another, yelling and chanting across a line of police officers. One attendee at the Palestinian Solidarity Committee's rally, speaking just two days after Hamas's mass murder of 1,300 across Israel, claimed they were there to support "our brothers and sisters being mass-murdered, tortured, killed and raped in Israel."

More recently, on October 28, 2023, the Palestinian Solidarity Committee helped a protest calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. One protestor held a sign reading "Colonialism, Apartheid,

Genocide [sic],” and, according to the Bloomingtonian, an IU student smeared Israelis as “occupiers.”

As you are aware, on October 10, you released a “statement regarding the Middle East” that deplored “the horrific violence that has occurred over the past few days,” but that named neither the Israeli victims nor the Hamas perpetrators. Indiana Israel Public Affairs Committee President Ethan Fine, numerous alumni, and an IU assistant professor criticized your statement for failing to assign responsibility to Hamas for its terrorist attack. This criticism preceded a second, more specific statement from you clarifying that “Israel has suffered grievous atrocities at the hands of Hamas terrorists” and recognizing “the pain and fear that is affecting the Jewish community on our campuses.”

According to a recent resignation letter released by two now-former IUSG members, the student body president of IUSG is “is blatantly antisemitic,” and IUSG leadership has consistently ignored the concerns of Jewish IU students and “does not want to work with Jewish students.” The letter also alleges that one of the student’s superiors in student government told her that “[a]ntisemitism is not an issue on campus.”

U.S. colleges have experienced a 400 percent increase in antisemitic incidents this year, and antisemitic incidents across Indiana rose 106 percent last year. Last year, an antisemitic vandal ripped mezuzahs, a Jewish symbol, off IU students’ dorm doors. Given nationwide trends and IU’s recent past, IU leadership must aggressively respond reports of antisemitism on its campus.

As an IU graduate, allegations of antisemitism at my alma mater are personal and extremely concerning to me. As a lawmaker, I would note that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits anti-Jewish and antisemitic discrimination. If IU administrators condone or tolerate campus antisemitism, the university could lose access to federal funding.

The two IUSG members end their letter by stating their “hope that our resignation motivates action from leadership to combat bias and antisemitism on campus.”

I share their sentiment, which is I am requesting that, by no later than December 1, 2023, IU leadership brief my office on their findings regarding recent allegations of antisemitism within IUSG and provide my office with responses to the following questions:

- How many antisemitic incidents on IU campuses have been reported since October 7, 2023?
- When was the last meeting of the IU Antisemitism Advisory Board?
- Did the board make recommendations or issue findings at this last meeting?
- Were you or any other senior members of IU leadership in attendance at that meeting?
- Have you or any other senior members of IU leadership met with the IU Antisemitism Task Force since October 7, 2023?
- Did IU receive any reports of harassment or illegal activity after the October 9th and October 28th Palestinian Solidarity Committee protests?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Banks
Member of Congress