

THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.
7TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE
251 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5361

BERNARDSVILLE DISTRICT OFFICE
75 CLAREMONT ROAD, SUITE 206
BERNARDSVILLE, NJ 07924
PHONE: (908) 547-3307



COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Representative Thomas H. Kean, Jr
Written Statement for the Record

Committee on Education and the Workforce
Chairwoman Virginia Foxx

Full Committee Hearing Entitled: “*Calling for Accountability: Stopping Antisemitic College Chaos*”

May 23, 2024

Madam Chair, I appreciate and thank you for holding this critical hearing on the drastic increase in antisemitism on college campuses across our Nation. Additionally, this hearing highlights the vital role our higher education leaders and administrators must play to keep students of all religions, especially Jewish students, safe and encourage an environment of learning and growth.

I want to stress to one witness, Dr. Jonathan Holloway, President of Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, that situations, such as the pro-Palestine protestors encampment that occurred on campus a few weeks ago and the subsequent capitulation to the demands of radical, pro-terrorist advocates is unacceptable. Not only did these protests harm the entire student body by postponing final examinations for about a thousand students, but it emotionally, and potentially physically, harmed Jewish students, simply trying to learn and finish their academic year.

It is unfortunate that the recent episode, inspired by the events on Columbia’s campus in New York City, was not the only example of antisemitism on Rutgers’s campuses. Since October 7th, 2023, and the beginning of the pro-Palestinian and ceasefire protests, my office has been routinely flooded by the calls of concerned parents and alumni of Rutgers regarding events on campus. Jewish students have been singled out in the classroom and on campus for their religion and identity, as protestors associated being Jewish for support of the State of Israel and its right to defend itself.

The Rutgers chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine declared that Hamas’ actions as “justified resistance,” and some professors reiterated these claims, and questioned the validity of the brutality of Hamas’ attack. We have since seen a variety of instances, such as a death threat over social media toward a Jewish student and the removal of a Jewish student from the Rutgers Student Bar Association for speaking out against the organization sharing Hamas propaganda. Additionally, classes were interrupted at the Rutgers Business School in Piscataway, New Jersey, and the building was vandalized by pro-Hamas protestors as students and faculty feared for their safety. Moreover, the rhetoric and statements made by the Center for Security, Race, and Rights and the faculty associated with it have only inflamed tensions on campus and within New Jersey.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), since Hamas' brutal attack on Israel on October 7th, 2023, the United States saw a 140% increase from 2022 in antisemitic cases. Across the United States, the rate of antisemitic incidents is reaching levels not experienced in years, and it's unfortunate that college campuses are ground zero. To be clear, there is absolutely no place in this world for antisemitism, and there is no place in New Jersey and on Rutgers University for such bigotry. It is crucial that all of us – federal, state, local, community, and university officials, leaders, students, and individuals alike, work together to combat the scourge of antisemitism and call it out for what it is.

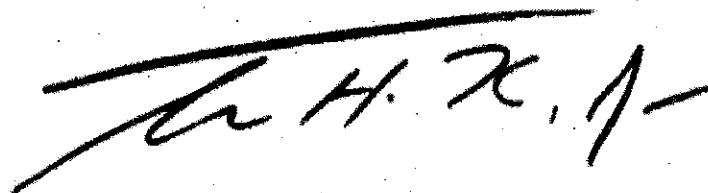
Moreover, the pro-Palestine protestors made ten demands to the Rutgers University administration to end the encampment. These demands ranged from requested scholarships, establishing a partnership with Birzeit University in the West Bank, releasing an official statement acknowledging a genocide against Palestinians, and calling for a full permanent ceasefire. From recent reports, of the ten demands made by the protestors, eight were agreed to by the administration. One of the demands met was to display the Palestinian flag on campus. Another capitulated demand was to provide full amnesty for all students, student groups, faculty, and staff who participated in the protests. The administration should not have surrendered to a single demand made by these harmful protestors. That is why, on May 3rd, 2024, I called for President Holloway's resignation. Rutgers University should never have negotiated. We should not submit to hatred like this in America, and we must stand up to it. The Rutgers Administration has proven it is no longer willing to protect a safe campus environment for all students.

Now, this campus sentiment did not begin at Rutgers but has been tolerated and nurtured on campuses across our nation for decades by administrators, which came to headway on October 7th, 2023. Since then, radicalized students and individuals have harassed, assaulted, and intimidated fellow students, namely Jewish students. These protestors unlawfully entered university buildings, erected unlawful and unsafe encampments, canceled sentimental ceremonies, and disrupted learning. Each of the Presidents and Chancellors who participated in this hearing should be ashamed of their actions and decisions that allowed these antisemitic actions to take hold on their campuses.

Our colleges and universities should not be striking deals with these protestors and American taxpayer dollars should not be going to fund universities without a backbone and aligning with these bigoted principles.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for allowing me to submit this written statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. H. Kean, Jr.", with a long horizontal line above it.

Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress