

July 11, 2025

The Honorable Tim Walberg  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Scott  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: In a Time of Unimaginable Pain, Georgetown Made Space for Us**

Dear Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee,

We are families of United States citizens who were taken hostage or murdered following the October 7th attacks in Israel. For more than 644 days, we've traveled across the United States and the world, telling our stories, asking for help, and fighting every day to bring our loved ones' home.

One stop along that journey stands out.

In September 2024, we were invited to speak at Georgetown University by the School of Foreign Service and the Center for Jewish Civilization. We came not knowing what to expect, but what we found was a community that listened. A packed room of students and faculty filled the Hariri Building to hear us speak. They showed up with open hearts and minds. The questions they asked were thoughtful, respectful, and grounded in a genuine desire to understand what our families were going through.

During a fraught time in so many public spaces after October 7, 2023, Georgetown created space for something different: a conversation rooted in empathy, dignity, and truth. Professor Bruce Hoffman moderated our discussion and encouraged us to speak openly and honestly about the nightmare our families have been living through.

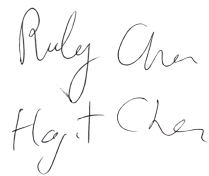
Georgetown didn't just host us — they welcomed us. They gave us a platform to share our stories and gave their students a chance to learn not just about politics or policy, but about humanity. In doing so, Georgetown lived up to its values and mission as a Jesuit institution: to seek truth in service of the common good and to accompany others, especially in times of suffering.

We are forever grateful for that and hope more universities will follow their lead.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Dekel-Chen



Ruby and Hagit Chen



Ronen Neutra



Orna Neutra



Iris Weinstein-Haggai

**CC:**

The Honorable Burgess Owens  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
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The Honorable Glenn “G.T.” Thompson  
Member  
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The Honorable Glenn Grothman  
Member  
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The Honorable Elise M. Stefanik  
Member  
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The Honorable Rick W. Allen  
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The Honorable James Comer  
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The Honorable Lisa C. McClain  
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The Honorable Mary E. Miller  
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The Honorable Julia Letlow  
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The Honorable Kevin Kiley  
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The Honorable Erin Houchin  
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The Honorable Michael A. Rulli  
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The Honorable Robert F. Onder, Jr.  
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The Honorable Mark Harris  
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The Honorable Mark B. Messmer  
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The Honorable Randy Fine  
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The Honorable Joe Courtney  
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The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson  
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The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
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The Honorable Mark Takano  
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The Honorable Alma S. Adams  
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The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier  
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The Honorable Donald Norcross  
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The Honorable Lucy McBath  
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The Honorable Jahana Hayes  
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The Honorable Ilhan Omar  
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The Honorable Haley M. Stevens  
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The Honorable Greg Casar  
Vice Ranking Member  
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The Honorable Summer L. Lee  
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The Honorable John W. Mannion  
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The Honorable Yassamin Ansari  
Member  
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