

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

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Christopher Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigations
935 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Attorney General Garland and Director Wray:

We commend the Justice Department (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) for their ongoing dedication to fighting hate crimes in our nation, and we further applaud the DOJ for its successful implementation of all recommendations outlined in the October 2019 *Religious-Based Hate Crimes* report,¹ which was previously issued by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to help the DOJ track and prevent religious-based hate crimes on America's college campuses. Nevertheless, there remains significant work to be done, as the FBI's most recent hate crime statistics for the calendar year 2022 indicated that schools, colleges, and universities were the third most common location for a hate crime to be committed in the United States.²

Moreover, as Members of Congress, we are incredibly concerned by the bevy of recent reporting indicating an alarming surge of hateful antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents on U.S. college campuses in the days and months following October 7th, 2023. In turn, we write today to solicit data on these incidents, to procure information about the steps that the DOJ and FBI have taken to proactively respond to these new outbreaks of violence on our nation's university campuses, and to encourage additional efforts from the DOJ and FBI to protect our nation's students from religious-based hate crimes and all other forms of hate.

Indeed, in the days and months since October 7th, 2023, disturbing reports of anti-religious hate incidents have flooded in from college campuses across the country. In two representative incidents, on October 31, 2023, a junior at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY was arrested by the FBI after he made a series of vile, antisemitic threats to commit a mass shooting in a campus dining hall that served kosher meals³; just a few days later, on November 3, 2023, at Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA, a driver purposefully targeted an Arab Muslim student with his vehicle during a hit and run while shouting Islamophobic epithets at the student.⁴ In response to the broad array of similar post-October 7th reports from college campuses, the Department of Education initiated investigations into reported incidents of

¹ *Religious-Based Hate Crimes: DOJ Needs to Improve Support to Colleges Given Increasing Reports on Campuses*, U.S. Government Accountability Office (Oct. 31, 2019), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-6>.

² Isabella Espadas Barros Leal, *Schools are increasingly locations for hate crimes, FBI data shows*, NBC News (Jan. 30, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/schools-are-increasingly-location-hate-crimes-fbi-data-shows-rcna136341>.

³ Alyssa Lukpat, *Cornell Student Arrested After Allegedly Threatening to Kill Jewish Students*, Wall St. J. (Nov. 2, 2023), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/cornell-student-arrested-after-threatening-to-kill-jewish-students-eb30652a>.

antisemitism and Islamophobia at seven different prestigious East Coast universities in November 2023, including Columbia University, Cornell University, and the University of Pennsylvania.⁵ Shortly thereafter, in December 2023, the Department of Education announced similar investigations into alleged incidents of anti-religious hate at six other schools, including Stanford University, the University of California-Los Angeles, and Whitman College in Washington State.⁶

We believe these recent, deeply concerning developments emphasize the urgent need for targeted federal action by the DOJ and FBI to release recent data on the prevalence of hate crimes on college campuses and act to prevent these incidents outright to keep students and staff safe during these difficult times of increased antisemitism and Islamophobia. In turn, we Members of Congress respectfully request the DOJ and FBI provide us with answers to the following five questions by Wednesday, March 13th, 2024:

1. How many reports have the FBI's Electronic Tip Form and local FBI Field Offices received regarding hate crimes on college and university campuses since October 7th, 2023? How does this differ from the same time period during the prior year?
2. What general efforts are the DOJ and/or FBI currently undertaking to respond to any reported post-October 2023 outbreaks of hate crimes on college and university campuses?
3. To what extent are colleges and universities reaching out to the DOJ and the FBI for information about ways to address religious-based hate crimes on their campuses, including requests for available DOJ and/or FBI resources to help colleges, campus law enforcement, and other stakeholders in monitoring and addressing these crimes?
4. How are the DOJ and FBI proactively reaching out to colleges and universities in order to share information about the available DOJ and FBI resources that are designed to assist colleges, campus law enforcement, and other stakeholders to help them monitor and address religious-based hate crimes and other hate crimes on college campuses?
5. How are the DOJ and FBI utilizing congressionally appropriated resources to address the post-October 7th, 2023, spike in hate crimes on college campuses? What additional resources should Congress look to provide, and for which programs?

Thank you in advance for your attention to this urgent matter and for the DOJ and FBI's unwavering commitment to combating hate crimes on America's college campuses. We look forward to your agencies' prompt response to help secure the safety of our nation's students.

Sincerely,

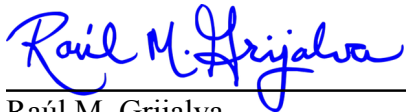
⁴ Anna Yang, *Hit-and-run injures Arab Muslim student, incident under investigation as hate crime*, The Stanford Daily (Nov. 4, 2023), <https://stanforddaily.com/2023/11/04/hit-and-run-injures-arab-muslim-student-incident-under-investigation-as-hate-crime/>.

⁵ Rene Marsh & Katie Lobosco, *Cornell, Columbia and UPenn among 7 schools facing Education Dept. probe over allegations of antisemitism and Islamophobia*, CNN (November 17, 2023), <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/16/politics/department-of-education-antisemitism-islamophobia-investigations/index.html>.

⁶ Zach Montague & Tracey Tully, *Education Dept. Is Investigating Six More Colleges Over Campus Discrimination*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 13, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/13/us/politics/education-department-campus-discrimination.html>.



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



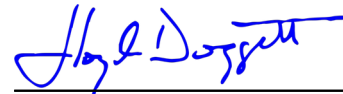
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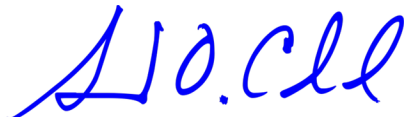
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