

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

May 2, 2024

The Honorable Gary Peters
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Peters:

We write following the alarming reports about the Office of District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) declining a direct request from officials at George Washington University to assist in restoring lawful order after days of unlawful, antisemitic and disruptive demonstrations that occupied parts of the campus.

Despite being repeatedly warned about their unlawful trespass by university officials late Sunday night, the anti-Israel demonstrators belligerently breached police barricades and entrenched themselves in the University Yard area of campus. It has now been reported¹ that, after receiving a direct request from university officials to help remove the trespassing demonstrators, the Mayor's office has allowed this lawlessness to continue by refusing to act and defying requests for police assistance.

To be clear, this was not a case in which Mayor Bowser's office or MPD allowed the university's administrators and authorities to manage their own affairs on campus. Rather, this was Mayor Bowser's office declining a direct request from the university to help restore order against a group of trespassers unlawfully and disruptively occupying areas of campus, and threatening Jewish students, after being repeatedly told by university officials to disperse. The fact that the office of the Mayor of Washington, D.C. reportedly declined this direct request for law enforcement assistance out of concern for "the optics" of trespassing protesters violently resisting police is beyond the pale. Mayor Bowser's apparent belief that this criminal activity should be tolerated is emblematic of the larger failings of the D.C. government's soft-on-crime approach to law enforcement that has led to dramatic spikes in property crime and violent crime in the nation's capital.

¹ <https://www.nationalreview.com/news/d-c-police-reject-george-washington-universitys-request-to-clear-out-anti-israel-encampment/>

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As Members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, we urge you to schedule a hearing and require the attendance of Mayor Bowser and the MPD Chief of Police to address this alarming lapse in effective law enforcement at the earliest opportunity. The committee should also invite Jewish students and members of the faculty at George Washington University to testify and share their experiences with the antisemitic protests on campus. Our committee has the jurisdiction and responsibility to conduct effective oversight over the affairs of the District of Columbia, and we cannot sit idly by as the nation's capital descends into lawless chaos.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Dr. Roger Marshall
United States Senator