



Written by [James Murphy](#) on December 11, 2023

## University Presidents Under Fire After Refusing to Clearly Condemn Calls for Genocide of Jews

The presidents of three prestigious universities are facing serious scrutiny after to refusing to outright condemn calls for the genocide of Jewish people on their campuses in a Capitol Hill hearing last week. The presidents of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard University, and the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) were called to resign after prevaricating on whether calls for Jewish genocide would be a violation of the universities' code of conduct.

In a Tuesday [hearing](#) of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Sally Kornbluth of MIT, Claudine Gay of Harvard, and Liz Magill of UPenn refused to say that calls for a Jewish genocide were prohibited when asked directly about it by Representative Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.). Thus far, only Magill has resigned over the controversy.

Magill and UPenn Board of Trustees chair Scott Bok both announced their resignation on Saturday. Magill will remain at the university as a tenured faculty member at Penn Carey Law.

Asked by Stefanik to answer "yes or no" as to whether calling for the "genocide of Jews" was a violation of UPenn's rules or code of conduct, Magill refused to answer definitively.

"If the speech turns into conduct, it can be harassment. Yes," Magill answered.

A clearly annoyed Stefanik followed up, "I am asking, specifically, calling for the genocide of Jews, does that constitute bullying or harassment?"

Magill answered that the question was a "context-dependent decision."

She later attempted to explain her answer in an [apology](#): "In that moment I was focused on our university's long-standing policies, aligned with the U.S. Constitution, which say that speech alone is not punishable," Magill said. "I was not focused on what I should have been, the irrefutable fact that a call for genocide of Jewish people is a call for some of the most terrible violence human beings can perpetrate."

In the end, Magill, who had been under pressure over other alleged missteps at the university, couldn't see any way out and resigned.

"Worn down by months of relentless external attacks, [Magill] was not herself last Tuesday," said Bok in his own resignation announcement. "Over prepared and over lawyered given the hostile forum and high



AP Images  
Liz Magill



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stakes, she provided a legalistic answer to a moral question, and that was wrong. It made for a dreadful 30-second sound bite in what was more than five hours of testimony.”

Stefanik couldn't resist taking a brief victory lap when Magill's resignation was announced.

“One down. Two to go,” the congresswoman posted on X. “This is only the very beginning of addressing the pervasive rot of antisemitism that has destroyed the most ‘prestigious’ higher education institutions in America.”

Harvard's Gay has also apologized, apparently hoping to ride out the storm.

“I am sorry,” she [told](#) *The Harvard Crimson*. “Words matter.”

“When words amplify distress and pain, I don't know how you could feel anything but regret,” Gay added.

When asked point blank by Stefanik if calls for a Jewish genocide violated Harvard's code of conduct, Gay also claimed that it depended upon the “context” of the call for genocide.

An incensed Stefanik shot back at the non-answers: “It does not depend on the context. The answer is yes and this is why you should resign. These are unacceptable answers across the board.”

Thus far, Kornbluth has resisted calls to apologize or resign, with Mark Gorenberg, chair of the corporation that runs the university, issuing a [statement](#) standing behind the president.

“The MIT Corporation chose Sally to be our president for her excellent academic leadership, her judgment, her integrity, her moral compass, and her ability to unite our community around MIT's core values. She has done excellent work in leading our community, including in addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hate, all of which we reject utterly at MIT. She has our full and unreserved support,” Gorenberg said.

All three universities have been the scenes of large-scale protests since Israel responded to the Hamas terror attack of October 7. A common refrain among leftist students is that Israel is currently engaging in a genocide of Palestinians as they attempt to remove the terrorist organization from their soil.



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