

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

BARBARA A. FAVOLA
40TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF ARLINGTON COUNTY

2319 18TH ST. NORTH
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201-3506



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Holly Hazard, (703) 338-9590

Senator Favola’s Statement on the Protests on Virginia Campuses

ARLINGTON, VA – Regarding the student protests this week in Virginia and the response from law enforcement, Senator Favola released the following statement:

“This week, we have seen students on college and university campuses across Virginia gather to make their voices heard. I absolutely support the right of these students to engage in peaceful protest. The rights to free speech and assembly are foundational to our democracy, and must be protected. Young people in particular, have historically been at the forefront of social change, and we must not stifle their voices, as long as they are articulated civilly and within the bounds of the law.

Our institutions of higher education have a duty to respect diverse viewpoints within their student bodies, and should foster and encourage civil discourse and debate. College is a time for students to engage with new ideas and with the world, and we should encourage them to find productive ways to express themselves and effect change, including peaceful protest.

I unequivocally condemn any expressions of antisemitism or Islamophobia, and other hateful rhetoric that incites harm against an individual or groups of individuals. Such prejudice has no place on our college campuses or anywhere. Institutions of higher education must ensure that all students feel safe, and that campuses are inclusive environments free of harassment and bigotry. Violence and destructive behavior are unacceptable and cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

I understand that universities and law enforcement are balancing various concerns, but it is my sincere hope that to the extent possible, they exercise restraint in responding to these protests going forward. Escalation does not serve anyone’s interests.”

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Senator Barbara Favola represents Virginia’s 40th district, which is contained within Arlington County. Senator Favola serves on the Education and Health Committee, among other committees, and chairs the Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee.