

Ben Sasse's Letter on Israel to Jewish Gators

A model of moral clarity, compared with the mush from the Ivy League.

By

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[263](#)



University of Florida President Ben Sasse Photo: Douglas R. Clifford/Zuma Press

In the face of Hamas's atrocities, some U.S. college administrators at first said little or issued equivocating mush, such as what Dartmouth College put out Tuesday in its "Statement on the Israel-Gaza War." A notable exception: University of Florida President Ben Sasse.

Here's what Mr. Sasse wrote Tuesday in an email addressed to "Jewish Gator Alums," which deserves to be quoted at length:

"I will not tiptoe around this simple fact: What Hamas did is evil and there is no defense for terrorism. This shouldn't be hard. Sadly, too many people in elite academia have been so weakened by their moral confusion that, when they see videos of raped women, hear of a beheaded baby, or learn of a grandmother murdered in her home, the first reaction of some is to 'provide context' and try to blame the raped women, beheaded baby, or the murdered grandmother. In other grotesque cases, they express simple support for the terrorists.

"This thinking isn't just wrong, it's sickening. It's dehumanizing. It is beneath people called to educate our next generation of Americans. I am thankful to say I haven't seen examples of that here at UF, either from our faculty or our student body.

"In the coming days, it is possible that anti-Israel protests will come to UF's campus. I have told our police chief and administration that this university always has two foundational commitments: We will protect our students and we will protect speech. This is always true: Our Constitution protects the rights of people to make abject idiots of themselves.

"When evil raises its head, as it has in recent days, it is up to men and women of conscience and courage to draw strength from truth and commit ourselves to the work of building something better—to the work of pursuing justice and pursuing peace. That is what we aim to do through education, compassion, and truth here at the University of Florida."

What a statement. Somebody should tell this guy to run for public office. Now that the Ivies have been criticized for their initial equivocations, they should look to Florida for how to condemn mass murder, amazing as it remains that they apparently need a model.