

# [***Anti-Israel Protests Sweep U.S. College Campuses; Biden To Talk About Abortion Rights Amid Protests; United States Accuses Israel Of Human Rights Abuses In Gaza; Awaiting Judge's Decision On Trump Gag Order; DOJ Paying $138 For Mishandling Nassar Case; Melania Trump Headlines Fundraiser For LGBT Group; MMA Fighter Captures 8-Foot Gator***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BW3-KK01-JCS1-6002-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News THE STORY WITH MARTHA MACCALLUM 3:00 PM EST

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**Body**

MARTHA MACCALLUM, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Martha MacCallum, and this is THE STORY. The spread of anti-Semitism in America, reaching even more college campuses this afternoon. As many look for leadership, the president chooses what is sometimes referred to as both sides-ism in his first on-the-record comments on these hot tensions. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You condemn the anti-Semitic protests on college campuses?

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I condemn the anti-Semitic protests. That's why I've set up a program to deal with that. I also condemn those who don't understand what's going on with the Palestinians.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: More on that from the President in just a moment, but first let's get straight to Senior Correspondent Steve Harrigan, who is reporting live at NYU on the action there this afternoon. Hi, Steve.

STEVE HARRIGAN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Martha, the crowd here has been going at it for about two hours. The crowd is getting bigger, and they are getting louder as well. We're hearing chants of free, free Palestine. This is called a nationwide strike and already more than a thousand people involved in it here.

This is a movement that started at Columbia University. It spread to NYU and Yale, other elite universities across the Northeast, even out to Berkeley, now in California. Some high schools too beginning to get involved as well. This has really been a hard thing for administrators to deal with.

They seem to have been caught flat-footed so far. They don't know how to deal with it. They sweep away the tents. They call in the police, but days later those tents are back. It's really brought online in-campus education, online learning here at the campus to a standstill in many places. Martha, back to you.

MACCALLUM: All right, Steve, we'll keep a close eye on it. We'll go back there as the situation merits. Thank you very much. We're also going to talk with Clay Travis, get his unique perspective on this in just a little while as well. But back to President Biden, who today is campaigning in Florida.

And at this hour, there is no more response from him on the shocking growth of these anti-Israel protests. He is speaking in Florida, though, about abortion rights, an issue that he thinks could work for him in the 2024 election in that state. Vice President Harris also talking about abortion and health care, she's in Wisconsin today.

She did, though, tell a local TV station when asked point-blank about these protests saying that she's deeply concerned about growing anti-Semitism in the United States. That was the extent of her comments there.

In moments, Media Buzz Host Howie Kurtz, also Hogan Gidley, former Trump White House Principal Deputy Secretary; Obama advisor Robert Wolf, former Obama advisor, and first we go to White House correspondent Jacqui Heinrich with the very latest on the president today. Hi, Jacqui.

JACQUI HEINRICH, FOX NEWS CHANNEL WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Hey, Martha, you know the president's been in front of cameras more than a few times since all this spiraled out of control and he has not seized any of those moments to speak out firmly against this. He has tweeted 25 times since Saturday, including nine times about climate, but no mention of the protests on these campuses.

When our Fox producer shouted that question you just played, he did issue that both sides condemnation. And the White House sent a statement on Sunday that was pretty strong, but it was from the Deputy Press Secretary, Andrew Bates, who just defended President Biden speaking to reporters on Air Force One.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANDREW BATES, WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY: In the president's Passover statement, he directly addressed the vile comments that circulated over the weekend with a call to action echoing the rhetoric of terrorist organizations, especially in the wake of the worst massacre committed against the Jewish people since the Holocaust is despicable. We are of course monitoring these situations closely.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HEINRICH: But the president's Passover statement only referenced what's happening at schools after four paragraphs about the rituals of Passover, efforts to get a ceasefire and hostage deal, a two-state solution, and humanitarian aid into Gaza. Biden said in the fifth paragraph, we must speak out against the alarming surge of anti-Semitism in our schools, communities, and online. Silence is complicity.

Even in recent days we've seen harassment and calls for violence against Jews. This blatant anti-Semitism is reprehensible and dangerous. It has no place on college campuses or anywhere in the country. We will see if the president says anything in Florida. He walks straight past the reporters on his way out of the White House, Martha.

MACCALLUM: Jacqui, thank you very much. With that, we bring in "MEDIA BUZZ" Host Howie Kurtz, Hogan Gidley a former Trump Re-election Campaign National Press Secretary, and former White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary now America First Policy Institute Senior Advisor for Strategic Communications -- that's a lot of titles, Hogan -- And Robert Wolf, former Economic Advisor to President Obama, Founder and CEO of 32 Advisors, and a Fox News Contributor.

You know, it's interesting to note that there hasn't been any sort of whole-of-government response to this. And Hugh Hewitt pointed out in a very interesting piece today, calling on President Biden to take a leadership role here, that the Department of Education and the DOJ should be enacted to move in, to try to protect these students,

get them to have a safe environment to go to class in. But he pulled up the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, and really sadly, I think, this is what is on the front page of the Department of Education for Civil Rights office: "The majority of our OCR staff are working remotely because of the pandemic." So, please send us an email. Robert, what can we expect from our federal government and from President Biden? What should he be? What should his response be? And all of this enormous government that we have that seems to be not put to use whatsoever in what we're seeing.

ROBERT WOLF, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: So, Martha, thanks. As you know, it's personal to me. I'm an Ivy League guy. I'm Jewish and my family was impacted by the Holocaust. So, I've been -- I'm taking the other side of this. President Biden has been unequivocal in his comments. Silence is complicity, threatening and intimidation is anti-Semitism.

They started the first national strategy for combating anti-Semitism. No one has been stronger on Israel since October 7th, making sure they got funding, including putting ammunition there in advance. He's also been fighting in a bipartisan way, fighting for more aid to Israel, and that finally is going to pass.

And I would also say I was recently at a U.N. summit with the first gentleman, Doug Emhoff, who is talking about anti-Semitism and violence and these threats on a continuous basis. So, I think they are articulating that this is critically important and that anti-Semitism, there is a hard line in the sand and you don't cross it.

MACCALLUM: OK, well talking is one thing. Statements have gone out. We have an image here of the Little Rock Nine from Arkansas in 1957 breaking the desegregation barrier. Obviously, that led to a lot of strife during the civil rights effort. On the right-hand side of your screen, you're seeing Palestinian supporter, students, who seem to have won Howie Kurtz because students who feel unsafe, mostly Jewish students, have basically been sent home from Columbia University. So, where is the police protection that eventually came for students, black students, who wanted to safely go to schools in America? Where is that protection for these Jewish students to finish their semester at places like Columbia?

HOWIE KURTZ, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Well, more places like Columbia and NYU and Yale should call in their local police force and all the arrests that we had last week. But now, it does seem spiraling out of control. And look, President Biden as the Commander-in-Chief should own this story about the spread of anti-Semitic poison, about the walkouts, about the arrests, and also about the switch to virtual learning at these very expensive schools. He could give a speech.

So, what happens? He gives two sentences to a tossed off reporter's question when you can't really hear it very well, and it's very terse, and I think that may be because he is trying to not further alienate the anti- Israel wing, the squad, and others in his own party, but he really should be out there. He should absolutely take ownership of this issue and back it up with actions as you were suggesting.

MACCALLUM: Yes, another piece out today criticizes President Biden and basically says that he's letting Dearborn Michigan dictate his policy on all of this, Hogan. What's your response to that? And I know you obviously worked for President Trump who wants to be president again. This is a sticky situation. How, how do you think it should be dealt with from the executive office?

HOGAN GIDLEY, FORMER TRUMP RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN NATIONAL PRESS SECRETARY: Well, I'm glad you brought up Dearborn because this is what these actions by Joe Biden or inactions, if you will, are all about. This has been going on for days and we didn't hear a single word from this administration. And finally, we do. And of course, he botches this as well.

And I'm sorry, but you can say on one hand how he's so tough in support of Israel, but at the same time he's caught on hot mic saying he's going to go have a come-to-Jesus moment with Benjamin Netanyahu, how he's working for a ceasefire. These people on college campuses are shouting death to America. They're shouting, I am -- we are Hamas, they're talking about placating, they're talking about supporting terrorism.

This should be a no-brainer for the administration to come out, but as is with most things, it's about ***politics***. He knows he's got a problem in this election. He knows he has a problem with the folks out there who don't support Israel. He knows he has a problem in Michigan. So, what he's trying to do is play both sides of this issue. It is a serious problem for him, and he's left college campuses exposed to a lot of danger and a lot of vitriol.

MACCALLUM: I just have a few seconds left, but I want to give Robert a very quick response on that. Should President Biden, you know, allow law enforcement to come in and make sure that these Jewish students can safely get to their classrooms from their dorms and give them the right to an education that they have paid for?

WOLF: Campuses absolutely have to be safe. I agree with what Howie said. The police need to go in to make sure that these threats and intimidation don't cross the line to violence. We have to do that, but this is not a time to call in the National Guard.

MACCALLUM: OK, all right, gentlemen, thank you very much for your input there. Great to have all three of you with us today.

KURTZ: Thanks, Martha.

GIDLEY: Thanks.

MACCALLUM: So, as we've been talking about a walkout at NYU this hour, which is ongoing right now downtown in New York City, fairly large gathering, looks peaceful at this moment. We're going to keep a close eye on it, of course, as the anti-Israel contagion spreads to some of the country's most elite universities all across America, really. Clay Travis with an interesting observation and take on what we're seeing here, next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Israel is a terror state!

AMERICAN CROWD: Israel is a terror state!

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: One, two, three, four.

AMERICAN CROWD: One, two, three, four.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Occupation no more!

AMERICAN CROWD: Occupation no more.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Down with Hamas! Victory for Israel! Down with Hamas! Victory for Israel!

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Protesters facing off against each other last night near Columbia University in New York City. Classes, now going hybrid. They have canceled the rest of the school year, which only goes for about another week, apparently, at Columbia University. But the students are going to be at home, which is not the college experience that they paid for or had hoped for. They should have the right to be in their classrooms, learning, and experiencing all of that. But this is the situation as you see it.

Similar scenes at NYU. Right now, there's a walkout underway downtown in Manhattan. "OUTKICK" founder Clay Travis is standing by.

But first, let's check in with senior correspondent Steve Harrigan, reporting from New York. Hi, Steve.

STEVE HARRIGAN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Martha, they're calling this a nationwide strike, and it doesn't look like they are going anywhere soon. The numbers about 1,500. We're hearing them chant, free, free Palestine. And some questions now being raised about who's behind this organization, and who is funding it, especially after Columbia University called in police, took away all the tents, and then just days later, a whole new 100 tents suddenly appeared.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KAZ DAUGHTRY, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT: Ask yourself this question. You need to ask yourself this question. Look at the tents. They all were the same color. They all were the same type of tents, the same ones that we saw on NYU, the same ones that we see in Colombia. To me, I think somebody is funding this.

Also, they are professional agitators in there that are just looking for something to add -- to be agitated about, which is the protests.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HARRIGAN: More than 100 people were arrested outside of NYU overnight. It's not clear how many of them were students. When you look at the arrest records, many of the ages 24, 25, 27.

And the big question is how long is this going to go on? You mentioned that Colombia is pretty much shut down for on campus learning that could go through the end of the term and even to graduation on May 15th. Martha, back to you.

MACCALLUM: Sad state of affairs. Steve, thank you very much.

Let's bring in, "OUTKICK" founder, Clay Travis. Clay, always good to see you. Thank you very much for being here today. It's interesting to note that Robert Kraft and others, the owner of the Patriots, you know, has been discussing pulling his money donations that he has made to Columbia.

Here is a quick soundbite from him from last night on "HANNITY". Watch.

ROBERT KRAFT, OWNER OF THE PATRIOTS: The same is happening now in this great country that offered so many opportunities to our families, who came here as immigrants. And we have to keep it open. We can't have this intimidation that's filtering through all these colleges.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Talking about anti-Semitism that we see all across these universities. Clay, what's your take on where we are today on this?

CLAY TRAVIS, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONTRIBUTOR: Oh, I got so many thoughts, Martha. Thanks for having me on. To start with, when Charlottesville happened, Donald Trump was ridiculed, reviled, attacked on a level that frankly, hasn't come close to what Joe Biden is being held accountable.

And remember, Biden himself said that the reason he ran for president was because of what he saw at Charlottesville. Well, now we have hundreds, if not thousands of protests that are every bit is anti-Semitic, far worse, in many ways, honestly, than what we saw in Charlottesville in terms of the scope and significance of them.

Joe Biden is failing when it comes to standing up for Israel and Israel's right to defend itself. And Martha, we've said this on "Clay and Buck" for a while, but I'm starting to see other people kind of have this take too.

I just want to give you a hypothetical. Pretend that in Mexico, a cartel group had come across the United States border, killed 1,200 people in the United States in cold blood because they were American, then taken over 100 of our citizens hostage and going back across the southern border.

What would we do to Mexican people who might be innocent, but in any way, were harboring that group that had attacked the United States, killed over 1,200 of our people and kidnapped over 100 of them?

We would rain down holy hell upon that group. And every American with a functional brain would understand why we were doing it. I don't understand why anyone with a functional brain in America right now, doesn't see that analogy as to what Israel is doing. The worst single day for Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Everybody wants to run around and try to compare Trump to Adolf Hitler on the far-left in America. Well, the most devastating deadly day for Jewish people since the Holocaust just happened on October 7th, and these idiot imbecilic kids, and everybody else affiliated with them is actually marching in support of Hamas in many respects in what they did.

I find it, frankly, absolutely unacceptable. And I think all of the adults are failing here, in terms of what they are countenancing on so many of these different university campuses.

MACCALLUM: All right. Interesting point. So, may I ask you a couple of questions/ With regard to Charlottesville, I think it's a very good point to make, because it was anti-Semitism in Charlottesville.

TRAVIS: Yes.

MACCALLUM: That Joe Biden said, drove him, inspired him to run for president.

TRAVIS: That's right.

MACCALLUM: And he was extraordinarily angry about this anti-Semitism. He said, this is not America. You know, that we cannot talk about it, and he criticized Trump in that moment, with the same sort of suggest -- same sort of comment that he made today -- or yesterday, rather, which is, you know, well, I understand both sides. I understand the Palestinian side, I understand the Israel side.

So, we're -- and we all know, you know, that the anger that we sometimes see from President Biden, what happened to that anger? How come he is not still feeling it when he sees these students, I -- one I talk to yesterday, who was poked in the eye with a Palestinian flag, a Jewish student.

Another one I spoke to this week who had to move to her grandmother's house because she can't live on campus anymore.

TRAVIS: I think it's a fabulous question, Martha. And remember, the very fine people comment is actually a lie the way it was attributed to Trump.

MACCALLUM: It is.

TRAVIS: I want to just kind of remind people, Trump said, there were very fine people protesting on the side of -- remove the Robert E. Lee statue. There were other people who were saying, we don't think that it should be removed. He specifically condemned the anti-Israel protesters.

So, Biden in saying that he saw Trump's responses insignificant, was actually not being honest. And Martha, this is super significant. He just did the very fine people himself yesterday when he said that he was basically anti -- opposed to anti-Semitism, but also thought and effectively many were not respecting the Palestinian struggle. I'm paraphrasing him.

He did what Trump did only intentionally and worse, I think.

MACCALLUM: Yes. Well, he said sort of a half sentence about people understanding the Palestinian issue. Didn't -- you know, it wasn't a very fully thought-out statement. And I think there is a need for the president to be really clear on where he stands on all of this for the American people, because it's a -- it's a tumultuous time across the country. And leadership is definitely needed.

Clay, thank you. Always good to see you.

TRAVIS: Thanks, Martha. Thanks.

MACCALLUM: Clay Travis from "OUTKICK". So, President Biden's state department calling out the world's worst human rights abusers. And on page one, it includes a reference to Israel's actions after October 7th, alongside groups like Hamas and the Taliban.

So, this equivocating of Israel's actions and these other players on the world stage is a real question about where the White House stands, and where the United States stands on all of this.

The War on Warriors author, Pete Hegseth joins me next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: All right. Breaking right now, we are just been -- we've been told that President Biden is about to make off the record remarks. We'll see if he has anything to say about Israel. He is in Florida today. This is in Tampa. Let's listen in.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We have our LGBTQ Plus community, and we, of course, have our youth.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Closing the floor!

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We, and Florida, Democrats know that we are the last line of defense, protecting women's right to choose, making sure that we are holding Republicans accountable for getting us into the moment that we are in.

Donald Trump created this moment. He started campaigning on this in 2016. And he lived up to that promise -- only thing he lived up to.

And then, we come back here to State of Florida, where Ron DeSantis felt like he needed to run for president. And so, 15 weeks wasn't good enough. We had to go to six weeks.

In one week, we are going to have the most extreme abortion ban in the nation. And so, while Donald Trump created this moment, Ron DeSantis stood in this moment, and the Republican legislature in Florida helped create this moment.

And so, what are we Florida Democrats going to do in 2024?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Vote!

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We are going to vote, we are going to take back Florida, and we are going to make sure that the true champion for reproductive health care, and not just reproductive health care. But every issue that is important to the people of the state, and to the people of this nation, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris has been on the front lines, and in the trenches.

So, before I hand over the microphone to our president, I want to tell a couple of stories, because I'm not just standing here -- I'm not just standing here, because I'm the chair of the Democratic Party. And I'm not just supporting the president --

MACCALLUM: All right. To the president, we do want to get the president's remarks. So, we'll go there in just a second. He is preparing to speak. He's got some cards in his hand. We'll see what he has to say. We're told it's an off the record remark, which can be interesting in this environment.

So, President Biden's State Department though, as we were mentioning earlier, has grouped Israel in the same paragraph as Hamas on the front page of their annual report on the world's worst human rights violators. That's unprecedented.

Pete Hegseth is watching all of this play out with us and listening to what the president has to say in Florida.

But first, to state department correspondent Gillian Turner. Hi, Gilian.

GILLIAN TURNER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Martha.

Well, Secretary Blinken, has rolling out his Annual Human Rights Report here at the State Department yesterday. He talked to reporters trying to explain the decision to equate Israel's government with some of the deadliest regimes around the world.

Take a listen to what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANTONY BLINKEN, UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE: Do we have a double standard? The answer is no. As this report makes clear, in general, as we are looking at human rights and the condition of human rights around the world, we apply the same standard to everyone.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TURNER: So, today, Ambassador David Satterfield, that's President Biden's envoy for humanitarian affairs to the Middle East, acknowledge and response to my question that the Biden administration actually does apply a "very different standard to Israel." Listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DAVID SATTERFIELD, SPECIAL ENVOY MIDDLE EAST ISSUES: We require from Israel because it is the right and moral thing to do, a very different standard of conduct. And as I noted in my remarks, the President made clear on his visit to Israel shortly, after October 7th, it's not just strategically important for you to do this, it's the morally right thing to do.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TURNER: Well, the Human rights report features Israel on page one, along with Hamas in Gaza, the Taliban in Afghanistan, Putin in Russia and Chinese communists who are right now carrying out a genocide in Xinjiang. The report says, "We continue to urgently raise concerns surrounding the deaths of and injuries to tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians in Gaza." Critics, though, are insisting this approach really perverts the truth.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KEITH KELLOGG, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: They kind of take on the Israelis and try to be "evenhanded." It's really not. There are clearly bad guys in this situation and good guys, and the Israelis are the good guys in this.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TURNER: So yesterday the State Department condemns Israel's human rights record on coincidentally, the first day of Pesach, a major Jewish holiday. And then today, the Biden administration's humanitarian envoy admits that they do, in fact, apply a double standard to Israel's conduct in the war against Hamas. Martha?

MACCALLUM: OK. Gillian, thank you very much. So let's bring in Pete Hegseth, co-host of "Fox and Friends Weekend" and author of the new book the "War on Warriors." Pete, good to have you with us.

I should mention that we are monitoring the comments by President Biden. He's speaking to some of the school kids or some of the younger, I guess, individuals who are in the room there today, not school kids, but he's speaking to some of the people who are adults, who are in the room and we're going to monitor those comments and see if he says anything about the situation in Israel. But let me get your top line thought here on Gillian's reporting about Israel now being on the first page of the human rights report from the State Department.

PETE HEGSETH, FOX NEWS HOST: Yes. You know, we were just covering Colombia, it doesn't surprise me. The State Department is a permanent bureaucracy staffed by graduates of places like Columbia, who believe that the Jewish state of Israel is as bad or worse than its Islamist opponents. Israel was not just listed on page one. It was listed before Iran, before China, before the Taliban and before Cuba.

And what a mess those two statements between the envoy and Anthony Blinken, there is no double standard. Of course, there is a double standard. I'll tell you this. The state of Israel will be studied, the IDF will be studied for the extent to which its response in Gaza has been as targeted or more targeted against the enemy than any offensive in a dense urban population we've ever seen.

They've taken unprecedented steps to protect civilian casualties against an enemy that teaches their kids how to count by counting dead Jews. And if you can't understand there's a moral equivalency difference between a fellow freedom loving country and radical Islamists, you don't deserve to be in the State Department, let alone being president of the United States.

So Israel doesn't have a friend in the White House right now because they are playing both sides of them. They're not willing to speak truth. And as a result, these reports become meaningless because they are based on nothing.

MACCALLUM: Yes, you know what? As you're talking, Pete, my mind goes back to the video that I watched that happened on October 7th. And I remember one of the Hamas fighters, there's a cell phone conversation that was recorded on that day -- yes. Where he calls his parents in Gaza and he says, mom, dad, you would be so proud of me. I just killed ten Jews. And he's ebullient. And his mom and dad are cheering and saying, I wish I were there with you for this.

So this is what Israel has been up against in this situation. You know, I mean, it's easy to forget all of this, but that is what started this. And I wonder -- I often also think, Pete, as we're watching this, that Hamas knew that the response from Israel would be enormous based on how savage that attack was.

So they must be thrilled when they see this State Department report, and they see how much further the United States is pushing Israel away, because that's their goal, that's what they wanted. And the heinousness of this attack, I think, was very intentional. You know what, hold on, Pete. Just hold that thought quick. I'm just going to dip into the President. Let's see if he's talking about this.

(BEGIN LIVE COVERAGE)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES: -- and say, you've got to win. Not because of me but because of the alternative. And they say, because my democracy depends upon it, meaning their democracy. So the whole world is looking, and they're looking to see how we handle ourselves in this election, not just in whether we win or not but how we handle ourselves.

And one of the things that, you know, for me, I got involved when I was a kid in electoral ***politics*** out of the civil rights movement. It all got down to one person at a time. I mean, it sincerely organized in my state to its great shame was segregated by law. That's why I got involved with a kid and I got out of high school and into college. And it's about just doing the basic things, talking to people, literally talking to people.

And for example, I'm really excited. We've raised almost a half a billion dollars so far. So far, we have 1.6 million contributors --

(END LIVE COVERAGE)

MACCALLUM: OK. He's thanking the fundraisers in the room. But, Pete, interesting comments. He's talking about the civil rights battle, right? And I'm just wondering as he talks about that, because we were talking earlier about desegregation and how the police helped young black students get into the classroom safely during the civil rights movement. But there's no safety being provided for Jewish students who want to get into the classroom safely right now.

MACCALLUM: Yes. One could argue he's got a civil rights moment on his hands right now. You also watch this, Martha, and you just don't know what's true. Like, was that story that he told true? Was his uncle cannibalized? Is that true? Just -- it's unclear at this point.

And nothing I heard from his remarks or the head of the Democrat Party was proactively about what Joe stands for. It's about how ugly and evil the other guy is. He's got a moment to stand very clearly against the base of his party, which is radically out of step with just decency. And he can't condemned -- I don't think he's capable and I think he's scared of that base at this point because he needs Michigan. And that's an unfortunate reality of our time.

MACCALLUM: Well, he says that people tell him on the campaign trail, you've got to win. Democracy depends on it. We will keep monitoring the President at this event in Florida. Pete Hegseth, thank you very much. Great to have you with us.

HEGSETH: Thank you, Martha.

MACCALLUM: So we are waiting for the judge to rule on holding former President Trump in contempt of court at his criminal trial here in New York City. Prosecutors accused him of violating a gag order ten times in this case. His attorney says that the former president should be allowed to respond to what the defense calls political attacks, some of them coming from the witnesses in this case, including lawyer Michael Cohen, who is the prime witness in this case, who has been trashing the former president pretty much on a daily basis on his podcast. He'll be a witness. He's not under a gag order.

Correspondent Nate Foy joins us outside the courthouse in lower Manhattan. Hello, Nate.

NATE FOY, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Hey, Martha. The state's first witness, former American Media CEO and President David Pecker testified today about an agreement that he made with former President Trump's old lawyer, Michael Cohen, to benefit the Trump campaign in 2016 and publish negative stories about Trump's opponents at the time. But while leaving court moments ago, you mentioned that former President Trump is very upset about this gag order that he's accused to violating ten times. He spoke about that while leaving court. Listen here.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP (R), FORMER US PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: My name is mentioned somewhere deep in the article (inaudible) in violation of a gag order. I think it's a disgrace. It's totally unconstitutional. I'm not allowed to defend myself, and yet other people are allowed to say whatever they want about me.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Judge Juan Merchan reserve his decision about possibly punishing Trump for violating that gag order. And Martha David Pecker will take the stand again Thursday morning. Today, he talked about his relationship with Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen. The two worked together to identify and suppress stories from people, including former Playboy model Karen McDougal and a former Trump Tower doorman.

When asked by prosecutor Joshua Steinglass why they focused on stories from women, Pecker said because Trump was known as an eligible bachelor who dated beautiful women. Today, Steinglass also revealed the state law that Trump is accused of breaking while allegedly falsifying business records. This was notably missing from Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg's indictment.

The law reads, "any two or more persons who conspired to promote or prevent the election of any person to a public office by unlawful means and which conspiracy is acted upon by one or more of the parties there too, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." So the argument from the DA's office is that Trump falsified internal business records to aid a conspiracy to win the 2016 presidential election. Martha?

MACCALLUM: OK. Nate, thank you very much. We'll see if the judge rules on that gag order issue and we'll keep on top of it.

In the meantime, Melania Trump joining forces with LGBT conservatives to tout the former president's record as a pro-gay president. We'll talk about that coming up next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: All right. We're just keeping an eye on this event -- off the record event in Tampa that we mentioned. He was thanking fundraisers. At one point, he took his mic away and knelt down, and talked to two little children who were in the room. And there's a bit of the back and forth.

He believes that he has a chance in Florida based on the issue of abortion and the six week ban in Florida that he believes could help benefit Democrats in the state, in the Sunshine State, even though it has been very reliably red over the last several elections. So, we'll keep an eye on that as President Biden speaks to that group in Tampa, Florida.

In the meantime, former first lady Melania Trump, who hasn't been all that active on the campaign trail of late, made a return over the weekend. And it's interesting because her first sort of big event was working to boost support among LGBTQ voters former president Trump in the last election, the group supported 25% of their vote in 2020, and the former first lady reportedly helped to rake in more than a million dollars at Mar-a-Lago at this fundraiser for the Log Cabin Republicans who advocate for Republican LGBTQ voters.

My next guest served as a co-chair of this weekend's event. He has been involved for a long time in conservative ***politics***. Bill White is CEO of the Constellations Group in Florida. Bill, welcome. Good to have you back. Good to have you back.

BILL WHITE, CEO, CONSTELLATIONS GROUP: Hi, Martha. Great to be with you.

MACCALLUM: So, you know, tell us a little bit about this event and about what the purpose was, and why it was important that the former first lady was part of this. What's the big message here?

WHITE: Well, I think the big message was this was her first solo event. She does many events with President Trump. We're members of Mar-a-Lago. They are together all the time. You could never keep up with President Trump going to every single event. He is superhuman, if I could say that.

But our first event with Mrs. Trump was her wanting to launch the most aggressive outreach to LGBT and suburban women voters in the history of a Republican presidential candidacy. And we actually had a small room because there was a lovely wedding going on at Mar-a-Lago. And we sold the event out in 36 hours. We had hundreds of people who wanted to come and meet the first lady, and experience this amazing opportunity to hear from her.

And she gave a phenomenal speech about unity, about bringing our country together. That we're so divided, it's time to come together and be human, and be loving, and be supportive of each other, and let's be patriotic and fight to take our country back. And the message was a big hit, Martha. And I really think that she is a super stealth, absolutely wonderful surrogate for President Trump. She loves him dearly. They have a beautiful son that they've raised together. She's a terrific mother, and we're so proud of her. And we're honored that she is taking this initiative and will be leading it going forward.

MACCALLUM: Yes. That this was her first solo event, as you say. So speaking of the current president, Biden, here's what he had to say in Tampa, Florida today, also trying to reach out to the voters of this group. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: And Obergefell legalized same sex marriage. Justice Thomas means it, and so does Donald Trump. Again, here's what that means. The right to make the best decisions for your health, the right to use birth control, the right to marry the person you love. All that's at risk now because it's no longer viewed by some of our good friends in the court as a constitutional guaranteed right.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: What's your reaction to that? He says that President Trump would take away Obergefell.

WHITE: Yes. Well, look, Joe Biden is the biggest flip-flopping guy out there. He was first against gay marriage. If you remember, in the great Meet the Press interview, he said, Barack and I are not for gay marriage. President Trump was, before he ran for president, supportive of marriage equality. He loves us. He sees us. He wants us to be successful.

And we believe, Martha, that President Trump is the only choice for us as a group to keep us safe, to bring back prosperity, and to make our families healthier and happier in this great country. We're for Donald Trump, and we're going to see a great outreach with Melania to this group, and we look forward to coming back and telling you about our upcoming events.

MACCALLUM: All right. Bill White, thank you very much. Obviously, it's one of the many voter groups that people will be watching very closely to see where they move in 2024. Thank you for being with us, Bill. Good to have you with us.

WHITE: Thank you so much.

MACCALLUM: So survivors of sexual abuse by former USA gymnastics coach Larry Nassar got a settlement today. Finally, it's been a long time coming with the Department of Justice for $139 million after the FBI failed to investigate despite numerous attempts to let them know what was going on and that an investigation was direly needed.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ALY RAISMAN, LARRY NASSAR VICTIM: You think this is hard for you? Imagine how all of us feel. Imagine how it feels to be an innocent teenager in a foreign country hearing a knock on the door and it's you.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Federal government paying more than $100 million after the FBI admitted that they did not do enough to investigate accusations of sexual abuse by Larry Nassar, a former team doctor for USA Gymnastics who abused many young gymnasts. Justice correspondent David Spunt reporting live from the Department of Justice. Hi, David.

DAVID SPUNT, FOX NEWS JUSTICE CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Martha. An important day for the healing process, 139 claims paid out by the Department of Justice to the tune of $138.7 million. Many women affected by the abuse of Larry Nassar over a period of several years. I spoke to an attorney earlier who says that this is just part of the healing process.

Now, the Department of Justice admitted in an internal report released in 2021 that publicly, the FBI agents in Los Angeles and Indianapolis did not move on allegations against Larry Nassar from 2015 and 2016. It came to light in this investigation. FBI Director Christopher Wray apologized and expressed regret to survivors back in 2021.

Now, the former doctor worked at Michigan State University. He's now behind bars for the rest of his life. More than 100 victims came forward, telling horrifying tales of repeated abuse.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER, LARRY NASSAR'S FIRST ACCUSER: At age 15, when I suffered from chronic back pain. Larry sexually assaulted me repeatedly under the guidance medical treatment for nearly a year. He did this with my own mother in the room, carefully and perfectly abstracting confused so that she would not know what he was doing.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SPUNT: I was on the phone with Mick Grewal. He represents 44 of the 139 victims that received compensation from DOJ. He says, "There is a sense of relief for my clients. There's also a sense of anger for some clients, a lot of re-traumatization. I can understand all that collectively. These women are going to deal with this for the rest of their lives. I truly hope this can bring some closure for them so they can continue down their healing path."

Now, the settlements from Nassar's crimes including different organizations other than the Department of Justice, now total around $1 billion total. Martha?

MACCALLUM: Quite a case. We spoke to a number of those young women and it is a torturous story. David, thank you. David Spunt reporting from Washington.

So let's check back in on the protests at NYU with senior correspondent Steve Harrigan. Steve, what's developing down there this afternoon?

STEVE HARRIGAN, FOX NEWS SENIOR CORRESPONDENT: The crowd is not going away about 1,500 strong and we're hearing chants, mainly free Palestine. But sometimes you hear other chants a lot less savory, like we are Hamas. Hamas, of course, the organization responsible for killing 1,200 people in Israel on October 7th. Also the chant that from the river to the sea, which basically means wipe Israel off the map.

Just to give you a sense of the environment here, a beautiful sort of Tuesday afternoon outside of NYU. We were standing here on the sidewalk and three or four police officers walked by. And a young woman and her friend walked by and just said the f word to the cops. And we both looked at each other like, did that just happen? There is a sense that the police here are the enemy, that the police here are hated.

The police here are trying to keep order. They arrested more than a hundred people yesterday. It's not clear how many of them were NYU students, how many were outside agitators. Some of the ages go up to age 30 or so, so not a lot of college freshmen in that group of RSTs. Martha.

MACCALLUM: All right. Steve, thank you very much. Steve Harrigan reporting on the story that we will be on really throughout the course of this week as we have watched what has happened at Columbia University and all over America at many schools.

So take a look at this, something completely different for you here. A man in Florida, wow. That's one way to take care of this problem, capturing an eight foot alligator with his bare hands. The gator ended up in the middle of the street, holy camoly, in Jacksonville over the weekend. He wrangled it.

He is an MMA fighter, folks, so don't try this at home unless you are. He's also -- his name is Mike Dragich. He is also a licensed alligator trapper. So yes, he definitely looked like he had a method there to his madness in terms of what he was doing. He did say that this was one of his wildest catches ever. So there's that. That play from Florida, folks.

Let's go back to these protests as we watch so you can get some of the sights and sounds of what this looks like. It has really been an extraordinary weekend. And now leading into this week, as we see many universities across the country where these protests are ongoing, a lot of questions about how much some of these protesters understand about Middle East ***politics***, about what the river to the sea means. You remember back in December, they did surveys of some of the students who were protesting back then, and many of them did not know which river or which sea they were talking about. But you do see a lot of pushback.

And the most interesting aspect, I think, of the coverage so far this week is that what we're seeing from the State Department, what we're seeing from the White House as Israel gets intense pressure not only from students on campuses, but from President Biden and from the White House, and from Secretary of State Blinken as well, who you heard earlier had put Israel on the front page of their human rights review, their annual human rights review over the situation in Gaza.

So a lot of discussion about ***politics***, about Michigan, about the uncommitted voters in Michigan who made it very clear that their vote is not necessarily secure for President Biden in this environment, so a lot of ***politics*** at play here. We'll continue to keep a close eye on all of this developing news over the course of the story this week.

MACCALLUM: Dow getting ready to close in a minute, in less than a minute, up 241. That's THE STORY for today. Thanks for joining us, everybody. We'll see you right back here tomorrow.

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