



Good evening. My name is Vicki Fishman. In addition to being a long-time member of Agudas Achim Congregation, I am the Director of Government and Community Relations for the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington. Since 1939 the JCRC has been advocating for human rights and social justice – we work to build bridges between communities; we advance policies that protect the rights of marginalized people, and we support the Jewish community and fight antisemitism. In recent years, as incidents of antisemitism have increased, our emphasis on fighting antisemitism has grown and since October 7, we have had time for little else. It is mind boggling and soul wrenching for me to share that since October 7 and the horrific, barbaric massacre in Israel resulting in the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust – hatred of Jews has exploded. Even before Israel began its military campaign to recover the hostages still being held after 102 unimaginable days of captivity – on October 7 itself, while our friends and family were still in hiding, while we still were learning of the horror that was unfolding – Israel was being blamed for the rape and dismemberment of its civilians, Jews were being told that we had it coming. In the month that followed the assault on the Jewish state, antisemitic acts around the country increased by a reported 400% as compared to the year before. Here in our region, the JCRC has been fielding calls in every jurisdiction from students and families who feel unsafe in their schools, on their campuses and online. Here

in our region, we have heard community leaders spreading the lie that the October 7 massacre didn't happen, was a hoax, a fabrication.

In case there is any doubt in your minds, the October 7 Massacre – the Black Shabbat – was unfortunately very real. By virtue of my job, I have reviewed footage from cell phones, security cameras and go-pros carried by the terrorists themselves. It is not film that anyone wants to see, but as an advocate, it seemed important for me to know. My words cannot do justice to the inhumanity that I viewed. From that viewing, I highlight for you not the physical acts – the killings and dismemberments – but the joy and enthusiasm with which the terrorists undertook their tasks. The elation with which one terrorist shared with his parents that he had killed 10 Jews with his own hands and the pride with which they responded is terrifying. The excitement with which the crowds on the streets of Gaza welcomed the terrorist back and spat upon the hostages is terrifying. This happened in Israel, and the terror is felt by Jews around the world.

One of the communities targeted that morning was Nahal Oz, where the Tibon family hid for 10 hours in their safe room. The Tibon family are fellow Alexandrians, whom my family and I visited this past Passover. My children and I ate with them, visited the petting zoo with them, ran in and out of the bomb shelters that encircle the park with them. I loaded the dishwasher 6 months ago in a house that was under attack on October 7. Thank GD they were rescued that day. Their babysitter was not. She remains in captivity.

I was in Israel last week and visited the Tibons with my son, who is a paratrooper in the Israel Defense Forces. My husband is Israeli, which makes my children Israeli citizens, so when my son graduated high school, he took his turn doing what all Israeli's do and enlisted in the IDF. My son is a good student of history. He saw that throughout Jewish history, even where Jews have flourished, the

safety and security of the community has repeatedly changed quickly and catastrophically - from the Roman's burning of Jerusalem to the Crusades, to inquisitions and expulsions, to pogroms in Damascus, Baghdad, Poland and Russia, and, of course, to the Holocaust. My son knows this history and chose to take his turn protecting his people. October 7 made that history real and immediate. And while I am filled with worry for him, I am proud of his decision, I am proud – and frankly dumbstruck - that he was part of securing the communities under attack on October 7, of stopping the massacre, of dismantling the Hamas terror network, of retrieving hostages. He will never be the same; I will never be the same; our community will never be the same. And I am without the right words to express the shock that the assault on our loved ones in Israel has triggered a rise in antisemitism around the world. We share these stories with you in the hope that they will help you understand and protect our community as you protect all Alexandrians.