

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 27, 2026

Mrs. Pamela S. Whitten
President
Indiana University
Bryan Hall 200
107 S. Indiana Ave.
Bloomington, IN 47405

Mrs. Karen E. Bravo
Dean
Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Indiana University
530 W. New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Dear President Whitten and Dean Bravo:

We write to you regarding extremely disturbing online posts mocking the death of the late Senator Lindsey Graham, recently made by Professor Elizabeth Houston, an adjunct professor at the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law.¹

As you know, Senator Graham unexpectedly passed away on July 11, 2026. For over 40 years, Senator Graham served this country with honor and respect, first as an officer in the U.S. Air Force and then as a dedicated public servant for the people of South Carolina. Senator Graham's passing drew moving and heartfelt tributes from Democrats and Republicans alike, a testament to his decades of tireless bipartisan work on behalf of his constituents and all Americans.

However, in response to his untimely passing, Prof. Houston took to social media to celebrate Senator Graham's death and even dropped off a cake mocking his death at his Washington, D.C. office.² On July 14, 2026, three days after the Senator's passing, Prof. Houston shared a photo on X depicting a cake featuring roses, a blue cross, Senator Graham's official portrait, and the words "Congratudolences." She shared the photo with the caption "I just dropped this cake off at Lindsey Graham's office. Congratudolences, Darline! Your brother is burning in hell, and now, you're working for the devil!"

On July 15, Prof. Houston doubled down on her actions by uploading a video on her Instagram account documenting herself picking up the cake and bringing it to the U.S. Capitol.³ During the video, Prof. Houston stated that the original idea had been intended for Senator Mitch McConnell before redirecting it toward Senator Graham. She also made offensive remarks about Senator Graham's death, stating, "Grindr lost an excellent customer," and "I even put a cross and roses even though he is in hell," further demonstrating the hateful nature of the message she intended to deliver.

¹ "Profile," IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law, n.d., <https://mckinneylaw.iu.edu/faculty-staff/profile.html?id=915>.

² Elizabeth Booker Houston (@booker_squared), "I just dropped this cake off at Lindsey Graham's office. Congratudolences, Darline! Your brother is burning in hell, and now, you're working for the devil!" X post (formerly Twitter), July 14, 2026, https://x.com/booker_squared/status/2077136282807828974.

³ Elizabeth Booker Houston (@bookersquared), "Our little adventure to the Russell Senate Office to drop off some funeral food," Instagram post, July 15, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DaymvSdA3Fw/?hl=en>.

Prof. Houston's actions are not only vile and cruel but also violate Indiana University's Principles of Ethical Conduct, which states "when dealing with others, Community Members are expected to be respectful, fair, and civil."⁴ In addition, celebrating the death of anyone, regardless of political affiliation or ideology, is abhorrent and counter to the values of civility, respect, and basic human decency that Hoosiers hold dear.

This kind of hateful and insensitive rhetoric has no place at Indiana University and is appalling to see from someone who is employed by your institution. Therefore, we demand that you remove Prof. Houston from her position as adjunct professor and terminate her employment immediately. Should you elect not to terminate Prof. Houston, we ask that you provide written responses to the following questions by July 31, 2026:

1. Will you condemn Prof. Houston's actions as vile, disgusting, and unbecoming of an Indiana University faculty member?
2. Do Prof. Houston's posts and actions meet the ethical standards and values of Indiana University? What kind of example do Prof. Houston's actions set for Indiana University Students?
3. According to the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law Mission Statement,⁵ the school of law aims to foster "a mature sense of integrity." Do you believe that Prof. Houston's comments and actions are in alignment with that mission?

We look forward to your responses and urge you to act decisively and promptly on this matter.

Sincerely,



Marlin A. Stutzman
Member of Congress



Mark B. Messmer
Member of Congress

⁴ Indiana University, "Principles of Ethical Conduct," approved by the University Faculty Council October 29, 2013, <https://principles.iu.edu/>.

⁵ Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. "Mission Statement," n.d., <https://mckinneylaw.iu.edu/about/mission-statement.html>