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By **NADINE STROSSEN**

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As a lifelong human rights crusader and immediate past president (1991-2008) of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), I am convinced that grappling with opposing ideas is an essential strategy for promoting equality, dignity, diversity, and inclusivity. I am heartened that so many college students, including at Middlebury, are actively championing these essential goals. I am also heartened to read, in accounts about the recent Legutko controversy, that many students supported and exercised free speech constructively: the students who planned to attend Professor Legutko's original lecture, to listen, and to ask probing questions; the student in Professor Matthew Dickinson's seminar who suggested inviting Legutko to speak with students in that seminar after college officials had cancelled his public lecture; the other seminar students who voted unanimously to invite Legutko to speak with them and who did engage in vigorous dialogue and debate with him during the "underground lecture"; other students, who learned about Legutko's participation in the underground lecture, and therefore attended it, also engaging in the discussion; and the students who undertook non-disruptive protests against some of Prof. Legutko's ideas, but who explicitly affirmed their opposition to disrupting or disinviting him.

Having read the Hamilton Forum's mission statement, as well as its diverse roster of past speakers and debates, I am impressed by its vital contribution to freedom of thought, critical inquiry, and civil discourse. As Prof. Keegan Callanan wrote in a campus-wide letter before the Legutko lecture had been cancelled: "No questions are out of bounds at Hamilton Forum events. Tough and incisive questions are the coin of the realm." Under Prof. Callanan's principled leadership, the Hamilton Forum offers invaluable educational opportunities for all members of the Middlebury community. I am sorry that, as a result of the college's lecture cancellation, most students on campus were shortchanged, especially those who disagree with some of Prof. Legutko's ideas.

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