

Thank you Mr. Chairman for convening this important session. I am here to support H.B. 476 *as it stands now, without amendments.*

I have seen the bigotry of the campaign against Israel in major corporations, college campuses, food coops, transit systems and more throughout the country and here in the state of Ohio. I urge the Senate to pass H.B. 476, which will be good not just for Israel but also for the state of Ohio.

Ohio does millions of dollars of trade and research with Israel. The trade that Ohio has with Israel encompasses many of the states' most important economic sectors, such as defense, technology research and development, and health sciences. In light of increasing efforts to target Israel and her international trade partners for commercial discrimination, the state's economic interests must be defended against attempts to weaken the state's ability to conduct trade with Israel. Boycotts of entities and individuals on the basis of national origin, particularly Israel, often amount to ethnic, religious, racial and/or nationality discrimination, which directly contradicts state public policy and the values of its citizens. Exercising discretion with taxpayer funds is an important part of reinforcing public policy and the basic ethical standards of government.

Unfortunately, today, across the country and around the world, there is a campaign whose goal is the elimination of Israel, plain and simple. It does not improve the lives of Palestinians in fact it hurts them. Soda Stream is a great example of this with over 700 Palestinians now out of a good paying job. In fact, the corporate office of Soda Stream USA is right here in Ohio. As Palestinian Human Rights Activist, Bassem Eid said a few weeks ago, "BDS hurts me as a Palestinian. BDS destroys the Palestinian economy."

We need you to stand up to the racist, anti-Semitic campaign known as the BDS campaign. There are over 200 territorial disputes in the world, and this movement targets only one for economic destruction: Israel, an loyal American ally, a bastion of human rights in a sea of tyranny, and the only true democracy in the Middle East. We need you to vote for H.B. 476 which will ensure a better tomorrow for the Palestinians, the people of Israel, the citizens of the State of Ohio and the United States.

Thank you again for convening this session and for the opportunity to be here.