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95th Ohio House District

Finance
Energy and Natural Resources
Agriculture and Rural Development

Chair: Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Development and Natural Resources



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Ohio General Assembly Ohio House of Representatives Representative Andy Thompson

February 7, 2018

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and fellow members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce committee, I am pleased to provide sponsor testimony for House Concurrent Resolution 10. HCR 10 condemns the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and incidents of anti-Semitism on college campuses and around the state of Ohio.

This resolution will encourage Congress, the President of the United States, Public Universities, and the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., to likewise condemn the BDS movement. A version of this resolution was first passed in the Tennessee General Assembly last year. Since then, another 9 states have passed similar resolutions with another 37 states in the process of considering similar resolutions.

In the context of HCR 10 the General Assembly stands for Israel's right to exist; for its right to self-determination and safety within its borders and in its ancestral home; its right to legitimate acts of self-defense; and more. We also stand against the growing scourge of anti-Semitism on our college campuses, including the malicious program known as BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions), a worldwide movement that conducts economic warfare against the State of Israel in an attempt to delegitimize the Jewish state and end its existence.

BDS is anti-Israel, anti-Zionist (the movement that helped establish the State of Israel), and by extension, an anti-Jewish campaign that calls for:

- boycotting Israeli products, academics and culture
- pressuring companies to stop doing business with and divest economically from Israel
- sanctioning Israel for employing self-defense measures

According to the AMCHA Initiative website <https://amchainitiative.org/antisemitism-tracker#> there were 469 incidents in 2015, 639 incidents in 2016, 626 incidents in 2017 and 9 incidents so far in 2018 Targeting Jewish Students and Staff, anti-Semitic expression, and BDS activity across the nation.

At Ohio State University in March 2017 an [article](#) in the school paper argued in favor of an upcoming divestment resolution by demonizing and delegitimizing Israel, stating, "If you find personal stake in the fight against racism, imperialism and settler-colonialism, voting "Yes" on Issue 2 is in your best interest... If you are against racism, you must be anti-occupation." On September 12, 2017 at the University of Houston, a student found dozens of [posters](#) from the group "Vanguard America" on campus. [One of the posters](#) had a black skull with a Jewish star in red on its forehead with text reading, "Beware the International Jew."

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HCR 10 contains a Freedom of Speech provision urging university administrators to discipline all faculty, staff, students, and administrators who violate anyone's First Amendment right to free speech. It is time for universities in Ohio to fix the problem before BDS and the resultant anti-Semitism on campus become more of an embarrassment, and a potentially very expensive embarrassment for the State of Ohio. Neither the Ohio General Assembly nor our Ohio universities and tuition-paying student and parents should have to fund the defense of lawsuits alleging behaviors which the General Assembly does not condone.

At this critical time, in the face of the virulent movement to promote anti-Israel boycotts both in this country and around the globe, we strongly condemn the BDS movement as incompatible with the values of our state and our country. Likewise, we reaffirm our support for Israel as a vital U.S. ally, an important economic partner and a champion of freedom.

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and fellow members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce committee, I thank you for your attention, and ask for your favorable consideration of House Concurrent Resolution 10. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.