



Council on American-Islamic Relations, Ohio
Columbus Chapter
4242 Tuller Rd. Suite B2 | Dublin, Ohio 43017
Telephone: 614-451-3232 | Fax: 614-451-3222
E-mail: info@cair-columbus.com
www.cair-columbus.com

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION, COMMERCE AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

FROM: COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS, OHIO

DATE: MARCH 20, 2018

RE: OPPOSITION TO HCR 10

Jennifer Nimer, Executive Director of the Columbus Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Ohio (“CAIR-Ohio”) presents this written testimony on behalf of CAIR-Ohio in opposition to House Committee Resolution 10.

HCR 10 encourages public universities to condemn the BDS movement and advises trustees, administrators, and educators at all levels to take an active stand against all anti-Semitic actions and intimidation taken against Jewish students on their campuses.

While the goal of protecting students from anti-Semitism is an admirable and important endeavor and one that CAIR-Ohio fully supports, we oppose this resolution on the grounds that it is overly broad and encourages universities to violate free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

HCR 10 encourages universities to deem BDS activity of any kind as an act of anti-Semitism. Boycotting Israel is an act intended to achieve political, social or economic change, namely to change Israel’s policies towards the Palestinian people. Such a boycott is a textbook example of free speech protected by the First Amendment. Campus BDS activities have provided a forum to discuss the occupation of Palestine, human rights abuses, unequal treatment under the law, and violations of International law. Resolutions such as HCR 10 hinder Palestinian students and other activists involved in campus BDS activities from their ability to work on issues related to Palestinian human rights.

By including peaceful protest in the definition of anti-Semitism, proponents of this resolution are distracting attention from serious acts of anti-Semitism, such as violence toward Jewish students. Debate of difficult ideas facing society in the areas of social justice are, in fact, a vital part of the educational experience and should not be silenced. This resolution hinders the exercise of free speech and civil debate on campus by students and student groups.

For the above-mentioned reasons, CAIR-Ohio urges that this resolution be rejected.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Nimer