

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 170

By Gresham

A RESOLUTION to condemn the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and increasing incidents of anti-Semitism.

WHEREAS, the citizens of the State of Tennessee have a history of standing against bigotry, oppression, discrimination, and injustice; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee and Israel have a long history of friendship and are great allies in support of each other's interests; and

WHEREAS, the State of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, is the greatest friend and ally of the United States in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Governor Don Sundquist signed the Tennessee-Israel Cooperation Agreement with the State of Israel, resulting in business, governmental, art, cultural, educational, and university activities between the State of Tennessee and the State of Israel, further strengthening the historic ties between our State and that country; and

WHEREAS, the elected representatives of Tennessee recognize the importance of expressing their unabridged support for the Jewish people and the State of Israel's right to exist and right of self-defense; and

WHEREAS, there are increasing incidents of anti-Semitism around the world, including across the United States and in Tennessee, reflected in official hate crime statistics; and

WHEREAS, the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement is one of the main vehicles for spreading anti-Semitism and advocating the elimination of the Jewish State; and

WHEREAS, activities promoting Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel have increased in the State of Tennessee, including on some university campuses and in other Tennessee communities, and contribute to anti-Semitic and anti-Zionistic propaganda; and

WHEREAS, the dramatic increase in Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign activities on college campuses around the country has resulted in increased animosity and intimidation against Jewish students, negatively impacting student programming related to the State of Israel and politics in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, leaders of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement say their goal is to eliminate Israel as the home of the Jewish people; and

WHEREAS, signs and messaging at anti-Israel rallies in Tennessee have adopted the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions slogan, “from the river to the sea Palestine will be free,” meaning there would be no Israel between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, that the State of Israel would cease to exist; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee’s elected representatives who defend the inalienable right to free speech understand that the goals and activities of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaigns in Tennessee are harmful to the State’s relationships with Tennessee’s Jewish citizens and with the Jewish homeland, Israel, and have a deleterious impact on the educational environment; and

WHEREAS, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign’s call for academic boycotts have been condemned by many of our nation’s largest academic associations, over 250 university presidents, and many other leading scholars as a violation of the bedrock principle of academic freedom; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the members of the General Assembly condemn the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and its activities in Tennessee for seeking to undermine the Jewish people’s right to self-determination, which they are fulfilling in the State of Israel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the General Assembly condemn activities that contribute directly or indirectly to the denial, violation, or delegitimization of any people's academic freedom, including, but not limited to, promotion of academic boycotts by the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the General Assembly consider the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and its agenda inherently antithetical and deeply damaging to the causes of peace, justice, equality, democracy, and human rights for all peoples in the Middle East.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the General Assembly reaffirm their support for the State of Israel, recognize that the Jewish people are indigenous to the land of Israel, condemn all attacks on the people of Israel, support Israel's right to engage in lawful acts of self-defense, and oppose all attempts to deny the legitimacy of Israel as a sovereign state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared and transmitted to the President of the United States, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, and the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., for transmission to the proper authorities in the State of Israel.