
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 136 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, DINNIMAN, TEPLITZ, LEACH, EICHELBERGER,
SCHWANK, SMITH, RAFFERTY, AUMENT, VULAKOVICH AND SCARNATI,
MAY 29, 2015

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, MAY 29, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Condemning economic, social, cultural and other boycotts of
2 Israel and growing incidents of anti-Semitism.

3 WHEREAS, The citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 have a history of standing against bigotry, oppression,
5 discrimination and injustice; and

6 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth and Israel have a long history of
7 friendship and are great allies in support of each other's
8 interests; and

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

12 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has strong
13 cultural, economic, social, business, governmental, art,
14 education and activities between the Commonwealth of
15 Pennsylvania and the State of Israel, further strengthening the
16 historic ties between this Commonwealth and that country; and

17 WHEREAS, The elected representatives of the Commonwealth of

1 Pennsylvania recognize the importance of expressing their
2 unabridged support for the Jewish people and the State of
3 Israel's right to exist and the right of self-defense; and

4 WHEREAS, The first attempt to boycott Jewish interests in the
5 Pennsylvania Colony occurred in 1662 and was rejected when Sir
6 Robert Carr, in 1664, assumed command of the Delaware in the
7 name of the English crown; and

8 WHEREAS, The instructions to Carr were that "all people
9 should enjoy the liberty of their conscience," and the proposed
10 boycott did not occur; and

11 WHEREAS, American Jews sided overwhelmingly with the American
12 Revolution and Haim Solomon, a Philadelphia citizen, was a major
13 financier of the American Revolution, although he died penniless
14 and bankrupt; and

15 WHEREAS, There are increasing incidents of anti-Semitism
16 around the world, including across the United States and in the
17 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, reflected in official hate crime
18 statistics; and

19 WHEREAS, The International Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
20 movement (BDS) is one of the main vehicles for spreading anti-
21 Semitism and advocating the elimination of the Jewish State; and

22 WHEREAS, Activities promoting BDS against Israel have
23 increased in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including on some
24 college and university campuses and other Pennsylvania
25 communities, and contribute to anti-Semitism and anti-Zionist
26 propaganda; and

27 WHEREAS, The dramatic increase in BDS campaign activities on
28 college campuses around the country has resulted in increased
29 animosity and intimidation against Jewish students, negatively
30 impacting student programming related to the State of Israel and

1 politics in the Middle East; and

2 WHEREAS, Leaders of the BDS movement say their goal is to
3 eliminate Israel as the home of the Jewish people; and

4 WHEREAS, Signs and messaging at anti-Israel rallies in
5 Pennsylvania have adopted the BDS slogan, "from the river to the
6 sea Palestine will be free," meaning there would be no Israel
7 between the Jordan River and Mediterranean, that the State of
8 Israel would cease to exist; and

9 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's elected representatives who defend
10 the inalienable right to free speech understand that the goals
11 and activities of BDS campaigns in Pennsylvania are harmful to
12 the Commonwealth's relationship with its Jewish citizens and
13 with the Jewish homeland, Israel, and have a deleterious impact
14 on the educational environment; and

15 WHEREAS, The BDS campaign's call for academic boycotts have
16 been condemned by many of our nation's largest academic
17 associations, more than 250 university presidents and many other
18 leading scholars as a violation of the bedrock principle of
19 academic freedom; therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
21 condemn the International Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
22 movement and its activities in Pennsylvania for seeking to
23 undermine the Jewish people's right to self-determination, which
24 they are fulfilling in the State of Israel; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Senate condemn activities which contribute
26 directly or indirectly to the denial, violation or
27 delegitimization of any people's academic freedom, including,
28 but not limited to, promotion of academic boycotts by the BDS
29 movement against Israel; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Senate consider the International BDS

1 movement and its agenda inherently antithetical and deeply
2 damaging to the causes of peace, justice, equality, democracy
3 and human rights for all peoples in the Middle East; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That the Senate reaffirm its support for the State
6 of Israel, recognize that the Jewish people are indigenous to
7 the land of Israel, condemn all attacks on the people of Israel,
8 support Israel's right to engage in lawful acts of self-defense
9 and oppose all attempts to deny the legitimacy of Israel as a
10 sovereign state; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Senate urge the Office of Attorney General
12 of the Commonwealth to explore whether the BDS movement violates
13 the laws of the Commonwealth, including laws pertaining to
14 antitrust violations, hate crimes, business torts and other
15 matters that may be within its jurisdiction; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
17 the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of
18 each house of Congress, each member of Congress from
19 Pennsylvania, the Office of Attorney General of the Commonwealth
20 and the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC, for transmission to
21 the proper authorities in the State of Israel.