

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

A JOINT RESOLUTION condemning the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel.

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey and Israel have a long history of friendship based upon economic, cultural, intellectual, and political cooperation and maintain a close alliance through the New Jersey-Israel Commission, each attempting to support the interests of the other; and

WHEREAS, The State of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, is the greatest friend and ally of the United States in that region, sharing a common bond rooted in the values of freedom, democracy, and equal rights; and

WHEREAS, The elected representatives of New Jersey recognize the importance of demonstrating unwavering support for the Jewish people and for the rights of the State of Israel to exist, defend itself, and enjoy full recognition among its sister nations; and further recognize Israel's meaningful contributions to the world in science, technology, and scholarship; and

WHEREAS, The international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel has become a vehicle for advocating the elimination and delegitimation of the Jewish State, and represents a strategic threat to the State of Israel; and

WHEREAS, The Antiboycott Laws under the federal Export Administration Act discourage and, in some circumstances, prohibit United States companies from furthering or supporting the boycott of Israel and, nevertheless, domestic and foreign companies continue to report receiving requests to engage in activities that further or support the boycott of Israel; and

WHEREAS, Efforts to pressure Israel via this movement are gaining momentum on university campuses nationwide, thereby creating a divide between Jewish and non-Jewish students and, as a result, developing resentment, bias, and an atmosphere on campus antithetical to academic freedom; and

WHEREAS, Leaders of the BDS movement have indicated that one of its goals is to remove Israel as the home of the Jewish people, with participants at rallies repeating the slogan, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," signifying the absence of the State of Israel between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea; and

WHEREAS, Rather than focusing on forging productive relationships and engaging in reconciliation efforts, boycotts are counterproductive and divisive to building an economy and infrastructure in the region that will allow both Israel and the Palestinians to live side by side and build trust in preparation for a negotiated settlement leading to a two-state solution and peace between two neighboring states; and

WHEREAS, There is no justification or equity in singling out one nation alone for a boycott on purported human rights grounds while ignoring nations with egregious human rights records; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's elected representatives understand that the goals and activities of campaigns such as BDS in New Jersey are harmful to New Jersey's relationship with its Jewish citizens and with the Jewish homeland, Israel, and have a deleterious impact on New Jersey's strong economic, scientific, educational and cultural ties with Israel, which bring jobs and other benefits to the citizens of our State; and

WHEREAS, Efforts to boycott cultural exchanges, educational cooperation and commercial interaction between Israelis and their peers among Palestinians and with people and institutions throughout the world will further exacerbate the conflict in the Middle East rather than promote mutual recognition, trade and normalization of relations where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side free from fear and violence; and

WHEREAS, The call for academic boycotts, or any other boycott, by the BDS campaign has been condemned by many of our nation's largest academic associations, over 250 university presidents, by presidents of New Jersey's major institutions of higher education, and many other leading scholars as a violation of the bedrock principle of academic freedom; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The State of New Jersey condemns the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and its activities as being inherently antithetical and damaging to the causes of peace, justice, equality, democracy, and human rights for all peoples in the Middle East, and for seeking to undermine the Jewish people's right to self-determination, being fulfilled in the State of Israel.

2. The State of New Jersey condemns activities that contribute directly or indirectly to the denial, violation, or delegitimization of any person's academic freedom, including, but not limited to, promotion of academic boycotts against Israel by the BDS movement.

3. The State of New Jersey opposes all attempts to deny the legitimacy of Israel as a sovereign state and to economically and politically isolate Israel within the international arena, including, but not limited to, the promotion of economic, cultural, and academic boycotts.

4. Copies of this joint resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Secretary of State to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, each member of Congress elected from this State, and the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., for transmission to the proper authorities in the State of Israel.

5. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 11, 2016.