

Dear President Monaco,

My name is xxxx and along with my husband, xxxx, as parents of a current sophomore student, we are extremely concerned by the passage Sunday evening of a motion by the Student Government leaders of Tufts University to support Boycott, Divest and Sanction activities against Israel, America's ally and the only democratic state in the Middle East.

The Tufts BDS vote was a tragic day not just for Jewish students attending Tufts, but for all students. The BDS proposition, on even the most basic of analysis, is nothing more than anti-semitism dressed up in a fancier package. If these student leaders were sincerely concerned with the University having investments tied to countries that violate human rights, there would be resolutions regarding North Korea, Iran, and Syria (which just used chemical weapons on its citizens). The deafening silence in this regard reveals the true reason why only Israel is targeted. That Israel is the only country in the Middle East where there is a vibrant democracy, and where the rights of women, members of the LGBT community, and the rights of immigrants are protected, makes the very idea of boycotting, sanctioning or divesting from Israeli companies akin to the actions of the Nazis in the early 1930's, where through a targeted propaganda campaign, Jews were discredited and their businesses boycotted. Those campaigns made it acceptable to view Jews through a negative lens. I know this first hand as my father had to flee his home in Germany overnight due to his neighbors turning on his family. The student leaders at Tufts are now following the example set by the Nazi propaganda machine, buying into a selective narrative, discrediting the State of Israel and its citizens, and rendering those students on campus who support Israel to be negatively viewed by their fellow students. This represents a frightening and disturbing threat to the Tufts culture.

It is noteworthy that Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), the campus-supported organization that put the motion on the Tufts Student Government's meeting slate, purposely planned the vote on short notice and on the Sunday night before the Monday start to the Jewish Passover holiday. Many Jewish students were of course away from campus in order to celebrate the Passover holiday with their families. By design, the community who would be most adversely affected by this vote were not fully represented. The fact that the vote proceeded nonetheless tells all of us that there was no real interest in a principled examination of the issues. Your words in the public statement below of being "concerned" by SJP's timing of putting the resolution forward do not go far enough. We know from what we have witnessed at other university campuses what comes next. This vote

will sadly legitimize and embolden Students for Justice in Palestine to continue to disrupt pro-Israel activities on campus, even more than they have done in the past. This type of behavior has been experienced directly by our child, and there is now well-founded fear that things will only get worse. Please note I have cc:ed Tufts alums, current, future and past parents of students, and Hillel representatives as it is important that they know about these recent disturbing developments.

President Monaco, I understand and have read your statement that the University will not be amending its investment policy in the face of the passage of this resolution. I appreciate that you have so indicated. But respectfully, this does not go far enough. Based on what we have seen develop at other university campuses, the passage of this resolution by the student leadership, and the manner in which it was done, gives us concern for the attitude towards Jews on campus and for our child's safety when our child wears a Jewish star or other symbols which identify our child's heritage. What is our child to say to Jewish students arriving for orientation when asked about diversity on campus and support of the Jewish and pro-Israel community?

President Monaco, I cannot imagine that you would allow in any student forum the sanctioning of the kind of hatred and prejudice underlying this resolution. The Tufts culture—one that prides itself on tolerance and diversity—is very much at risk. I hope that you will take this opportunity to be a strong leader and speak out against this anti-semitic resolution. As the late humanitarian Elie Weisel so eloquently pointed out, “(w)e must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.” Too many university presidents hide behind “freedom of speech” arguments to avoid dealing with what this insidious campaign represents. I urge you to follow a more principled and courageous path.

Sincerely,

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