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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 627 Session of  
2014

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INTRODUCED BY TURZAI, S. H. SMITH, DERMODY AND FRANKEL,  
JANUARY 29, 2014

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, JANUARY 29, 2014

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A RESOLUTION

1 Condemning the Academic Studies Association's academic boycott  
2 against Israel and calling upon the Department of Education,  
3 the State System of Higher Education, each of the State-  
4 related universities and all of Pennsylvania's independent  
5 colleges and universities to reject anti-Semitism and not  
6 participate in the academic boycott.

7 WHEREAS, Anti-Semitism is an intolerable and ugly form of  
8 bigotry, prejudice and hostility directed toward individuals of  
9 the Jewish faith and the Jewish State of Israel, often based on  
10 ethnic, cultural or religious identity; and

11 WHEREAS, The American Studies Association (ASA) is an  
12 academic organization composed of approximately 5,000 members,  
13 all of whom are members of academia specializing in the  
14 interdisciplinary study of American culture and history; and

15 WHEREAS, The ASA held a vote in which 1,252 of its members  
16 participated, and 66% voted in favor of an academic boycott  
17 against Israel, while 30% objected and approximately 4%  
18 abstained from the vote; and

19 WHEREAS, The motion was passed by only 16% of the membership  
20 of the ASA; and

1       WHEREAS, The ASA's academic boycott against Israel calls for  
2 a boycott of all of the universities within the State of Israel,  
3 a Jewish Democratic nation that promotes academic freedom and  
4 free speech and educates students from around the globe; and

5       WHEREAS, The academic boycott against all universities and  
6 colleges in Israel results in the restriction of academic  
7 freedom worldwide and reflects an anti-Semitic position; and

8       WHEREAS, The academic boycott is purportedly an effort to  
9 denounce alleged Israeli human rights violations, yet it  
10 effectively disengages the scholars within Israeli academic  
11 institutions from global academic collaborations and does not  
12 support Israeli peace efforts in the Middle East; and

13       WHEREAS, Due to the academic boycott, several American  
14 collegiate members of the ASA have withdrawn their institutional  
15 memberships, including members at Brandeis University and The  
16 Pennsylvania State University - Harrisburg; and

17       WHEREAS, Numerous university presidents from the nation's  
18 centers of academic study, including the University of  
19 Pennsylvania, Harvard University, Yale University, Johns Hopkins  
20 University, Cornell University, Haverford College, Princeton  
21 University, Lehigh University, Temple University, Boston  
22 University, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, New  
23 York University, Middlebury College and many others, have  
24 publicly condemned and rejected the academic boycott because it  
25 negatively impacts the progress for peace in the Middle East and  
26 unfairly targets Israel; and

27       WHEREAS, The practical effect of the American Studies  
28 Association Israeli boycott is a resurgence of anti-Semitism;  
29 therefore be it

30       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn in the

1 strongest possible terms the ASA's academic boycott against  
2 Israel as an intolerable, anti-Semitic, base form of bigotry and  
3 hatred and recognize that such conduct, particularly within  
4 centers of academic study, is unacceptable and cannot be  
5 tolerated; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives request that the  
7 Department of Education and the State System of Higher  
8 Education, in cooperation with each of the State-related  
9 universities and this Commonwealth's independent colleges and  
10 universities, acknowledge the serious problem of anti-Semitic  
11 conduct, the creation of a hostile learning environment  
12 worldwide and that any such institutions not participate in the  
13 academic boycott.