



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

New York State Senate Passes Senator Martins' Legislation That Strips State Funding from Student Organizations That Participate in Hate Speech

JACK M. MARTINS June 16, 2016

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate passed legislation he sponsored that would ban student groups from receiving state funding if they engage in hate speech, including advocating boycotts of Israel or other American allies.

“We should not give one single cent of public funds to student groups that attempt to harass, intimidate and abuse students of any race or religion. Recent incidences of advocating for BDS against Israel and “hate speech” targeting Jewish students are just the latest examples of anti-Semitic behavior. The absence of responsible action following these disturbing anti-Semitic incidents, the legislature must act to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not funding hate on our campuses or being used to harm Israel and our other allies. This sends a strong message that we will not tolerate hate; the Assembly and Governor must join us in sending that message as well,” said Senator Martins.

“People are entitled to free speech, but they are not automatically entitled to receive government funding to support their message,” Senator Martins added.

The legislation (S8017) comes in response to repeated incidents of anti-Semitism on CUNY campuses reportedly perpetrated by the student organization Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). SJP is a staunch supporter of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which attempts to harm Israel's economy in protest of Israel's domestic security policies.

Several months ago, media reports noted a number of disturbing acts targeting Jewish students and faculty at CUNY campuses, including Brooklyn College, John Jay College, Hunter College and the College of Staten Island. According to the reports, members of SJP directed numerous ethnic slurs at Jewish students, disrupted a faculty meeting and called one professor "a Zionist pig," and defaced university property with swastikas. CUNY leadership began an investigation into the incidents but has yet to report any findings, suspend SJP from campuses during the investigation, nor pledge to ban them pending the findings.

The legislation would build upon another measure sponsored by Senator Martins, which was passed by the Senate in January, that would prohibit New York State from investing in entities that engage in or promote BDS or other boycotts of America's allies.

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly.