



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senate Passes Legislation To Prevent State Funding From Supporting Efforts To Harm Israel And Other U.S. Allies Through Boycotts

JOHN J. FLANAGAN March 9, 2017

| ISSUE: **ISRAEL**



Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate has passed two measures to expand upon existing protections against state funding being used to support efforts to harm Israel and other American allies through boycotts and discriminatory economic agendas. The bills, sponsored by Senator Elaine Phillips (7th Senate District), expand existing state law to prevent New York from entering

into a state contract or investment with those seeking to economically harm American allies, and prohibit state funds from supporting organizations that participate in hate speech at public colleges and universities.

Senate Majority Leader Flanagan said, “It is more important than ever for New Yorkers to stand together against hateful acts of discrimination and to show our support for Israel. The Senate will continue to fight anti-Semitism and discrimination in all its forms and the measures passed today help prevent our state tax dollars from being used to undermine the economies of our greatest allies or to support intolerant activism at SUNY and CUNY campuses.”

Current New York State law prohibits the State from directly engaging in an international boycott against American-allied nations. New York City has a similar prohibition as part of its administrative code. However, the state could indirectly support a boycott of American allies by providing state monies to businesses, individuals or organizations that participate in boycotts like the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement aimed at causing economic harm to Israel and the Israeli people.

The first bill passed today ([S2492](#)) expands New York’s law by prohibiting state contracting with, or state investment in businesses or individuals that promote or engage in activities to boycott, sanction, or divest in Israel and other American allied nations. The state would use publicly available information to develop a reference list of companies, organizations, or other entities that have engaged in or promoted boycotts of American allies. New Jersey, Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina have adopted similar laws to ensure that their taxpayers are not paying to support these entities.

Senator Phillips said, “New York State has no business funding attacks against Israel or supporting hate; it’s an inappropriate and offensive use of taxpayer dollars. Entities facilitating an economic war against Israel and student groups that are harassing, intimidating and abusing Jewish students should not receive one penny of state support.”

The other measure ([S2493](#)) would prohibit student organizations at public colleges and universities from receiving public funding if they participate in hate-speech or advocate for boycotts of Israel and American allied nations. [Demonstrations, protests](#), and [discrimination](#) by publicly funded student groups at several CUNY and SUNY campuses in recent years targeted Jewish students and other supporters of Israel, resulting in an intimidating and discriminatory learning environment. The legislation would not abridge any element of free speech, but would merely prevent the state from financially supporting the activity of organizations that advance principles that are antithetical to the state, its constitution, and its citizens.

“Given the rash of cowardly anti-Semitic threats against Jewish institutions here in New York and across the country, it’s important to reinforce the message that New York State will not support hate and we stand with Israel. The Assembly should join the Senate in passing these important measures,” Senator Phillips added.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.

RELATED LEGISLATION

[2017-S2493](#)

- Introduced
 - ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
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January 13, 2017

In Assembly Committee

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2017-S2492

- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
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