House Resolution No. 35

Introduced by Assembly Members Halderman and Bonnie Lowenthal


August 6, 2012

House Resolution No. 35—Relative to anti-Semitism.

WHEREAS, The frequency and severity of incidents of contemporary global anti-Semitism are increasing according to reports by representatives from nations around the world, including the United States Department of State in 2008, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2004, and the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism in 2009; and

WHEREAS, On July 20, 2009, the United States Senate unanimously approved a resolution that unequivocally condemns...
all forms of anti-Semitism and rejects attempts to rationalize anti-Jewish hatred or attacks as a justifiable expression of disaffection or frustration over political events in the Middle East or elsewhere, and decries the comparison of Jews to Nazis perpetrating the Holocaust or genocide as a pernicious form of anti-Semitism; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of State, the United Kingdom’s All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have adopted or endorsed the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ working definition of anti-Semitism, which notes that in context certain language or behavior demonizes and delegitimizes Israel or attacks Israel with classic anti-Semitic stereotypes, such as denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation, drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli police to that of the Nazis, and accusing the Jewish people, or Israel, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, The United States Commission on Civil Rights reported in 2006 that anti-Semitism exists on some college campuses and is often cloaked as criticism of Israel, and recommended that colleges and universities ensure that students are protected from actions that could create a hostile anti-Semitic environment; and

WHEREAS, Over the last decade some Jewish students on public postsecondary education institution campuses in California have experienced the following: (1) physical aggression, harassment, and intimidation by members of student or community groups in student-sponsored protests and rallies held on campus; (2) speakers, films, and exhibits sponsored by student, faculty, and community groups that engage in anti-Semitic discourse or use anti-Semitic imagery and language to falsely describe Israel, Zionists, and Jews, including that Israel is a racist, apartheid, or Nazi state, that Israel is guilty of heinous crimes against humanity such as ethnic cleansing and genocide, that the Jewish state should be destroyed, that violence against Jews is justified, that Jews exaggerate the Holocaust as a tool of Zionist propaganda, and that Jews in America wield excessive power over American foreign policy; (3) swastikas and other anti-Semitic graffiti in residential
halls, public areas on campus, and Hillel houses; (4) student- and
faculty-sponsored boycott, divestment, and sanction campaigns
against Israel that are a means of demonizing Israel and seek to
harm the Jewish state; (5) actions of student groups that encourage
support for terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah
and openly advocate terrorism against Israel and the Jewish people;
and (6) suppression and disruption of free speech that present
Israel’s point of view; and
WHEREAS, California public postsecondary educational
institutions are admired throughout the world for their excellence
and diversity, and it is important that they provide continued
leadership in the fight against anti-Semitism; and
WHEREAS, While the response by California public
postsecondary educational institutions to incidents of hate and
intimidation, including anti-Semitism, with actions designed to
make their campuses safer and more inclusive of diverse students,
faculty, and staff have increased, the problem requires additional
serious attention on both a campuswide and systemwide basis; and
WHEREAS, The Assembly commends the initial actions taken
by the University of California (UC) to address anti-Semitism on
its campuses such as: (1) refusal by the UC Board of Regents and
the President of UC to consider divesture from companies doing
business with Israel; (2) strengthening UC’s systemwide policies
prohibiting student conduct motivated by bias, including religious
bias; (3) implementation of a campus climate reporting system
allowing any member of a UC campus community to report
incidents of intolerance or bias and development of a
comprehensive UC systemwide campus climate assessment; (4)
the formation of an Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture
and Inclusion whose members have conducted in-depth visits with
Jewish students and groups on UC campuses to better understand
their concerns and challenges and report back to the President of
the UC; and (5) immediate statements by UC leaders strongly
condemning specific acts of intolerance or bias when they occur;
and
WHEREAS, The Assembly urges both the University of
California and the California State University to take additional
actions to confront anti-Semitism on its campuses, with due respect
to the First Amendment to the United States Constitution; and
WHEREAS, While these actions are important steps, strong leadership from the top remains an important priority so that no administrator, faculty, or student group can be in any doubt that anti-Semitic activity will not be tolerated in the classroom or on campus, and that no public resources will be allowed to be used for anti-Semitic or any intolerant agitation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That the Assembly unequivocally condemns all forms of intolerance, including anti-Semitism, on public postsecondary educational institution campuses in California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Assembly recognizes recent actions by officials of public postsecondary educational institutions in California and calls upon those institutions to increase their efforts to swiftly and unequivocally condemn acts of anti-Semitism on their campuses and to utilize existing resources, such as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ working definition of anti-Semitism, to help guide campus discussion about, and promote, as appropriate, educational programs for combating anti-Semitism on their campuses; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.