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Assemblymember 24th District
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April 18, 2024

To: SUNY Chancellor John King

From: Assemblymember Charles Lavine, President, National Association of Jewish Legislators New York Chapter & Assemblymember David Weprin, Co-President, National Association of Jewish Legislators

Dear Chancellor King,

In passing a resolution prohibiting the Binghamton University Student Association from “doing business” with any companies that financially support Israel, the Student Association has engaged in conduct that is directly and obviously in contravention of New York State law.

Effective June 15, 2016, New York State Executive Order 157 mandates that State entities divest all public funds that support the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel, America’s ally. That first in the nation measure guarantees that no New York agency or authority engages in or promotes any investment activity that would further the harmful and discriminatory Palestinian backed BDS campaign.

For that reason, Binghamton University’s Student Association is not under any circumstances allowed to engage in BDS activity. The resolution is inherently suspect in that it is hard to imagine that the Association does any “business” with companies that financially support Israel.

The cynical action leads us to wonder why the Association would engage in such rash and ill-advised action without doing the most basic research into its legal authority to so act. Perhaps the emotion of the moment got the better of those who advanced and voted to support the resolution. This at a time when cooler heads need to prevail.

Alternatively, there are certainly some who now find it most convenient to use the word genocide as an antisemitic trope in the context of the Gaza conflict.

We do, however, want to give the Student Association the benefit of the doubt and call on the Association to withdraw its resolution. Should that not occur, we demand that the University rescind the Association’s charter as it has made a conscious decision to violate the laws of the State of New York prohibiting state agencies, which include our public university system, from discriminating against Israel.

We urge you to communicate with the Student Association to advise them that they are in violation of the law.

Sincerely,

Charles D. Lavine

David I. Weprin

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