



**IlliniPAC – Illini Public Affairs Committee**  
*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

May 18, 2016

**IlliniPAC**

503 E. John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

**To the Honorable Robert J. Dold, Peter Roskam, and Jan Schakowsky:**

We, the undersigned members of the Illini Public Affairs Committee, would like to thank you for signing the April 15, 2016 letter from the Bipartisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism. We appreciate your expression of concern to United States Secretary of Education John King about rising anti-Israel activity on college campuses. We were gratified to see this letter call on Secretary King to take active measures to further investigate these incidences. As written in the letter, this includes calling on the Office for Civil Rights to “identify and distinguish when speech and activity that are critical of Israeli policies become anti-Semitic harassment and intimidation.”

At the University of Illinois, we pride ourselves in having a campus community where students are free to express a diverse range of opinions. Part of the University's Mission Statement is to promote an environment where students “treat each other with dignity and respect and promote citizenship.” At IlliniPAC, we embrace these values through meaningful advocacy and dialogue by working with student leaders and the student body to convey the importance of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Running counter to these values are the increasing number of anti-Israel events, as well as calls for the University to participate in the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” (BDS) movement. These circumstances have generated hostilities towards pro-Israel and Jewish students. The University of Illinois was recently ranked amongst the highest in the nation for “Incidence of BDS Activity” and “Overall Antisemitic Activity,” according to the Amcha Initiative.

Unfortunately, we have witnessed the consequences of these actions. Students have been individually targeted for participation in pro-Israel student groups, Jewish and pro-Israel students have been harassed and intimidated by protestors, and anti-Semitic symbols and messages have been seen around campus. As stated in your letter, “anti-Semitic intimidation, harassment, and discrimination are manifested not only in easily recognizable anti-Semitic slurs but also in anti-Semitism masked as anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiment.”

These activities have created an environment where many students feel unsafe and this threatens their ability to earn an education. No student deserves for these experiences to be a part of their college experience.

We greatly appreciate your recognition of these issues and for signing this important letter. Thank you for your strong, continued support for the U.S.-Israel relationship - in every form that it takes - and for your leadership in Congress on the Bipartisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism.

We look forward to Secretary King's response.

Sincerely,

**Shani Benezra**

IlliniPAC President

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