



Illini Public Affairs Committee - IlliniPAC

Statement on Rejection of 2018 Israel Divestment Referendum

Illini Public Affairs Committee (IlliniPAC) is proud to announce that a referendum on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign student ballot calling for divestment from companies that do business with Israel has been defeated for second year in a row. Students overwhelmingly rejected this question with 3133 no votes to 1700 yes votes.

Diverse student coalitions joined together under the umbrella of United Illini for a United Campus to campaign against the referendum. Over 100 students spent countless hours working over the last several weeks. Their tireless efforts and incredible energy is what culminated in this victory. IlliniPAC will continue to work with United Illini for a United Campus to create and maintain a safe and welcoming campus environment for every member of our community.

This failed referendum threatened to divest from companies which provide students with jobs, scholarships, internships, and research opportunities. The reiteration of this harmful divestment referendum inflicted undue pain and hurt throughout our student body. Divestment shuts down dialogue and promotes division and hate by pitting students against one another.

This referendum was part of the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. BDS on campus is discriminatory against Jewish, Israeli and pro-Israel students. We have witnessed first-hand the connection between BDS and increased anti-Semitism. During the divestment vote last year, swastikas were found throughout campus and many students experienced anti-Semitic and racist incidents. This year, students faced harassment, intimidation, and even threats of physical violence.

IlliniPAC thanks the many University of Illinois faculty and administrators who added their voices to our cause. Seventeen professors signed onto an anti-BDS statement led by Professor Cary Nelson. Chancellor Robert Jones made a strong statement “in opposition to boycott of Israeli academic institutions.” Dean Brown of the Gies College of Business wrote a letter in The Daily Illini supporting our university's relationship with Israel. This solidarity shown from university leadership helped build morale amongst students, and we hope to further grow this supportive base moving forward.

IlliniPAC would further like to extend thanks to our many partner organizations for their continued support for our mission. This victory against divestment would not be possible without the important contributions of each organization involved.

We must now work together to ensure that the threat of divestment never comes back to our campus.

About us: *Illini Public Affairs Committee (IlliniPAC) is a bipartisan organization of pro-Israel students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign dedicated to strengthening the relationship between the United States and Israel. IlliniPAC advocates for bipartisan Congressional support for a strong U.S.-Israel alliance, educates the student body on the importance of supporting Israel, and engages student leaders across campus to promote a pro-Israel environment at the University. Learn more at illinipac.org/about.*