



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senate Passes Senator Phillips' Legislation Preventing State Tax Dollars from Funding Anti-Semitism or Attacks Against Israel

ELAINE PHILLIPS March 8, 2017

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Senator Elaine Phillips (R-Manhasset) announced that the New York State Senate passed two bills she sponsored to prevent state tax dollars from being used to support student groups that engage in hate speech or fund entities seeking to harm Israel and other American allies.

“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,” said Senator Phillips.

The first bill (S2492) would prohibit New York State from doing business with companies that seek to harm Israel and other American allies through actions like the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aims to cripple the Israeli economy in protest of Israel’s domestic security policies. This legislation would ensure that state tax dollars are not used to harm Israel and other American allies.

The Senate passed similar legislation last year, but the Assembly did not act. Governor Cuomo issued an Executive Order last June prohibiting state entities from contracting with,

or investing in, entities that engage in or promote the BDS movement. While the Governor's actions were a very positive step, an Executive Order is not law; a future Governor can repeal it at any time. Senator Phillips' legislation is necessary to codify these protections into law.

A number of other states adopted similar laws to prevent tax dollars from supporting BDS, including New Jersey, Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

The second bill (S2493) would ban student groups from receiving state funding if they engage in hate speech or advocate boycotts of Israel or other American allies. The bill comes in response to repeated incidents of anti-Semitism on CUNY campuses reportedly perpetrated by the student organization Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), a staunch supporter of the BDS movement.

"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.

Both bills have been sent to the Assembly.