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News Release

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**PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNANIMOUSLY CONDEMNS
BDS MOVEMENT AS ANTI-SEMITIC**

Today the Pennsylvania General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution that condemns the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. The resolution — House Resolution 370, introduced by state Reps. Matthew Baker (R-Bradford) and Mark Cohen (D-Philadelphia) — denounced the BDS movement as “one of the main vehicles for spreading anti-Semitism and advocating the elimination of the Jewish state.”

The resolution recognized BDS activities as a means of undermining the Jewish people’s right to self-determination in the State of Israel. The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh’s Community Relations Council (CRC) applauded and sincerely thanked the General Assembly for passing this historic commitment to Israel’s security and for the resolution’s recognition of the anti-Semitic origins of the BDS movement against the Jewish state.

Skip Grinberg, Chair of the CRC, commented, “The rare bipartisan unity on this measure shows Pennsylvania’s widespread commitment to reaching peace and justice in Israel through dialogue and understanding.”

With the passage of this resolution, Pennsylvania joins a growing nationwide effort by state legislators to oppose the BDS movement. New York, Tennessee, Indiana and Illinois have recently passed resolutions and bills that are similar to H.R. 370.

Gregg Roman, Director of the CRC, provided his perspective on the BDS movement: “This movement attempts to isolate Israel from the international community and advocates a one-state solution that would spell the end of the Jewish state. The BDS movement is widely considered to be a radical, fringe movement that democracies around the world are rejecting.”

In adopting H.R. 370, the General Assembly reflected a history of close friendship between Pennsylvania and Israel. In 1998, Gov. Tom Ridge signed the Pennsylvania-Israel Research and Development Agreement, which resulted in increased business, governmental, educational, and cultural activities involving the Keystone State and the Jewish homeland.

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News Release

Mr. Roman added: "BDS brands Israel as a pariah nation and seeks to isolate it from the international community. While the majority of these efforts are defeated, and support for Israel in the United States and in Pennsylvania remains strong, the opponents of Israel continue to make headway simply by poisoning the public discourse around Israel. This resolution is an antidote to this nefarious anti-Semitic hatred."

The resolution also recognized the "dramatic increase in BDS movement campaign activities on college campuses around the country has resulted in increased animosity and intimidation against Jewish students, negatively impacting student programming related to the State of Israel. ..."

Mr. Grinberg continued: "The Jewish community can be assured that the General Assembly recognizes that BDS campaigns are harmful to Jewish citizens here in Pittsburgh and in Israel. We can only hope that others will wake up to this realization."

The Community Relations Council (CRC) engages in public policy activities to promote social and economic justice for all, build amicable relationships among diverse community groups and enlist support on behalf of Israel. CRC is part of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, a member agency of The Jewish Federations of North America. The Federation raises and allocates funds to build community locally, in Israel and around the world. With the vision of a thriving, vibrant and engaged Jewish community, the Federation aims to carry out its work in the context of cooperation and inclusiveness. Learn more at www.jfedpgh.org.