January 17, 2014

Mr. Curtis Marez
President
American Studies Association
1120 19th St NW, Suite 301
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Marez:

We write in strong opposition to the American Studies Association’s (ASA) recent decision to boycott Israeli universities and academic institutions. While ASA has every right to express its views on policies pursued by any nation or government, we believe that the decision to blacklist Israeli academic institutions for Israeli government policies with which ASA disagrees demonstrates a blatant disregard for academic freedom.

The ASA claims that the boycott “is in solidarity with scholars and students deprived of their academic freedom and it aspires to enlarge that freedom for all, including Palestinians.” We believe that this boycott accomplishes just the opposite. The university is an institution intended to foster, encourage, and inspire constructive dialogue and original thought. However, this boycott undermines academic freedom by prohibiting educational and cultural exchanges with Israeli universities and academic institutions.

Even more concerning is the singular targeting of Israel for boycott. Like all democracies, Israel is not perfect. But to single out Israel, while leaving relationships with universities in autocratic and repressive countries intact, suggests thinly-veiled bigotry and bias against the Jewish State. This morally dishonest double standard has already been rejected by well over 100 university presidents, with several member universities even withdrawing from the organization in protest.

Some higher education organizations—including the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of American Universities—have denounced the boycott as unjust and harmful to the goals of academic freedom. Even Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas rejects boycotts of Israel, stating: “No, we do not support the boycott of Israel... We have relations with Israel, we have mutual recognition of Israel.”

Academic cooperation can be an important tool to help foster peace between Israelis and Palestinians, but you have chosen the unproductive path of isolation. We hope that the ASA will learn to appreciate the mutually beneficial academic ties between the United States and Israel and work with us to promote peace and academic freedom.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Peter J. Roskam
Member of Congress

Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress
Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Mike Pompeo  
Member of Congress

Patrick J. Tiberi  
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

Cory Gardner  
Member of Congress

Kevin Yoder  
Member of Congress

Jim Bridenstine  
Member of Congress

Kerry L. Bentivolio  
Member of Congress

Gene Green  
Member of Congress

Todd Rokita  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

Aaron Schock  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Tom Marino  
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress

John Fleming  
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Ron DeSantis  
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson  
Member of Congress
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress

George Holding  
Member of Congress

Luke Messer  
Member of Congress

Randy K. Weber, Sr.  
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho  
Member of Congress

Michael G. Grimm  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Devin Nunes  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers  
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

David Schweikert  
Member of Congress

Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III   
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress

Paul Cook  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Allyson Y. Schwartz  
Member of Congress

Tim Griffin  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress
SueMenKuster  Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  David Loeb  Jane
Member of Congress  Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Kathy Castro  Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress  Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  Randy Hultgren
Patrick Meehan  Member of Congress  Member of Congress

A. Green  Steve Scalise  Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress  Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Paul C. Broun  Joseph Crowley  Denny Heck
Member of Congress  Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Todd C. Young  Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress  Member of Congress

Cc:
Ms. Lisa Duggan
President-elect
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