

Dear Friends of Hillel Santa Barbara Hillel:

Following a 12 hour meeting that began the evening before, on Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 6:37am, the Associated Student Senate at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) voted against a resolution calling upon the university to divest from companies doing business in Israel. In a secret ballot, the student Senate voted 13-12 against the resolution.

We are extraordinarily proud of our students for their resolve and integrity in the months, weeks and days leading up to tonight's vote. After an exceptionally trying year of distance and isolation, they gave everything they had to fight this anti-Israel resolution. Pro-Israel students fought for the moral and intellectual integrity of our university and they succeeded. They rallied an impressive campaign to urge senators to vote against the resolution and reached out to campus allies and our community partners. Santa Barbara Hillel has supported these students every step of the way, offering staff support, guidance and deep connections throughout UCSB.

The entire meeting unfolded on Zoom, and the atmosphere during the over eight hours of open public comment was tense. A significant majority of the more than 100 speakers spoke out against BDS. Students showed incredible dedication by devoting so much of their passion, time, and energy immediately before upcoming final exams and the conclusion of the academic year.

In recent weeks some Jewish students have suffered through antisemitic harassment around campus. Santa Barbara Hillel and our campus partners will not allow messages of hate to tear apart our campus community or to isolate Jewish students because of their religious or ethnic identities or because they support the Jewish State of Israel. The pro-Israel community of University of California, Santa Barbara remain committed to being part of the solution. Santa Barbara Hillel will continue to create a community that supports peace and honest dialogue and that works to make our campus, our community and our Jewish homeland safer and more peaceful.

We know our students will unfortunately face similar campaigns in the future. We are buoyed by the knowledge that these bills do not represent the students, faculty or administration of University of California, Santa Barbara. We will continue to engage with our colleagues and friends throughout the university to send a clear message: resolutions like the one defeated today are not reflective of our campus community, and they go against the messages sent in recent years by the University of California Board of Regents and Chancellors.

We want to thank our dedicated and wonderful staff for their tremendous commitment to our students and Jewish life at Santa Barbara Hillel. We also want to thank Hillel International, the Israel on Campus Coalition and StandWithUs for their assistance during this difficult time.

Thank you for your continued support of our work. It has affirmed our resolve to keep working to engage Jewish and pro-Israel students throughout the Santa Barbara community.

Rabbi Evan Goodman, Executive Director
Robert Ingram, Board of Trustees President