

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3313

April 16, 2019

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

I have heard from a number of my constituents about a conference that took place last month at the University of North Carolina, in conjunction with Duke University, called "Conflict Over Gaza: People, Politics, and Possibilities." Their concern was over what said was anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric used on the taxpayer dime.

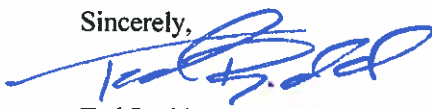
The Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies, is said to have "applied for and received a \$235,000 grant through the Department of Education in 2018."

My colleague Rep. George Holding (NC-02) wrote to you earlier this week urging the Department of Education to investigate this conference and provide us with answers to eight different questions. I wanted to express my support for this investigation so we can get the answers to each of these questions, which I've listed below.

1. What policies does the Department of Education have in place to ensure taxpayer funded federal grants are not awarded to organizations promoting a biased anti-Israel agenda?
2. Did the conference organizers invite any mainstream pro-Israel groups or speakers to participate? If not, why not?
3. Did any of the presentations include dialogue promoting the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement? If so, which presentations?
4. Did any of the presentations glorify acts of violence? If so, which presentations?
5. Were funds from the Department grant awarded to the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies used to finance any aspect of the event? If so, how much money was used and for what purposes?
6. Were items of clothing and other gifts given away to attendees? If so, did this merchandise convey any political messaging and were they purchased with taxpayer dollars?
7. In your opinion, did the conference present an overtly biased characterization of the situation in the Middle East?
8. If the reports of extensive anti-Israeli bias are true, is that grounds to revoke the remainder of the federal grant awarded to the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies?

While we should all be able to agree on the importance of protecting free speech - especially on college campuses, we should also agree that sending taxpayer dollars to fund anti-Semitic propaganda is irresponsible.

Sincerely,



Ted Budd