

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

September 27, 2018

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

Dear Secretary DeVos:

We have strong concerns with the recent reports that a University of Michigan professor refused to write a reference for one of his students to study in Israel.

The Times of Israel reported that John Cheney-Lippold, an associate professor in the university's Department of American Culture, had previously offered to write an undergraduate's reference letter for a semester abroad program in Israel. However, he followed up with her in a second email, saying:

"I am very sorry, but I only scanned your first email a couple weeks ago and missed out on a key detail. As you may know, many university departments have pledged an academic boycott against Israel in support of Palestinians living in Palestine. This boycott includes writing letters of recommendation for students planning to study there."

Professor Cheney-Lippold's refusal is part of a movement, and a trend at universities like the University of Michigan, known as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, otherwise known as "BDS." According to the Congressional Research Service, this movement is generally seen as a loose grouping of actors from various countries who advocate or engage in "economic measures against Israel or Israel-related individuals or organizations."

This movement is troubling, in and of itself, but especially due to the fact that a professor - at a prominent university in our country that receives federal taxpayer funding - is a participant.

An article on MSN Money last year put together a list of the 20 universities getting the most money from the federal government, and the University of Michigan was number three on that list. University of Michigan received over three-quarters of a billion dollars in 2015 from a range of government agencies, including the Department of Defense, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

As the Secretary of the Department of Education, we ask you to reaffirm the department's support for Israel and ensure that instances like the one at the University of Michigan are not occurring elsewhere on campuses throughout the country. The relationship between the United States and Israel is as strong as it's ever been, and we must take every step possible to make sure it stays that way.

Sincerely,



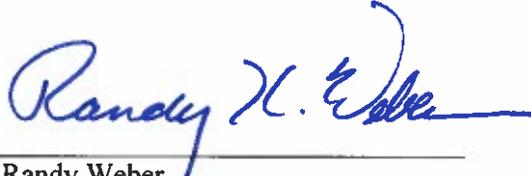
Ted Budd  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
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Randy Weber  
Member of Congress



Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman  
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