

1 **Protecting the Right of Americans to Peacefully Address**
2 **Injustice through Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions**

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4 **Item**_____

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6 Submitted by the California-Nevada Annual Conference Israel-Palestine Task Force
7 Number on the Board: 12; Number present when voting: 12;
8 Number voting for: 12; Number voting against: 0; Number abstaining: 0;
9 Date adopted: March 29, 2016;
10 Contact person: Patricia Daugherty
11 Financial Impact: None

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13 **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

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15 United Methodists and other religious communities have long
16 used the nonviolent tactics of boycotts, divestment and sanctions
17 in our efforts to stand in solidarity with oppressed people and
18 work for justice. These advocacy measures have proven to be
19 useful tools in helping to bring about a wide range of constructive
20 social change, including everything from strengthening labor
21 rights for farm workers in this country to ending apartheid in South
22 Africa.

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24 After studying the success of these efforts, a broad coalition of
25 Palestinian civil society issued a call for Boycott, Divestment and
26 Sanctions (BDS) in 2005 to advance the long-denied Palestinians'
27 right to self-determination, freedom, justice, and equality.

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29 In 2009, Palestinian Christians echoed the call for boycott and
30 divestment in their landmark document, [*Kairos Palestine: A*](#)
31 [*Moment of Truth*](#). This contemporary, ecumenical confession of
32 faith (often compared to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter*
33 *from a Birmingham Jail*, and other Christian manifestos written in
34 times of crisis) was commended to our local congregations for
35 use as a resource for instruction and advocacy by the 2010
36 Session of the California Nevada Annual Conference Session.

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In 2012, the United Methodist General Conference approved the resolution "[Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land](#)," calling for a boycott of all products produced in Israel's illegal settlements.

In January 2016, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church announced that five [Israeli banks](#) would be excluded from their investment portfolios because of their involvement in settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Boycotts, divestment and sanctions are a constitutionally protected form of free speech and protest that has long been used by people of conscience to effect positive social and political change. However, a recent rash of anti-BDS legislation has been proposed by legislatures and public institutions across the country that threatens to criminalize or penalize the use of these time-honored nonviolent tactics.

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2016 California Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church opposes any legislation that seeks to restrict the right to address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions, and joins the Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council in calling on our elected officials "to resist efforts to stifle the movement toward justice for Palestinians through the current wave of 'anti-BDS' legislation."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference Secretary write a letter to the President of the United States, the governors of California and Nevada, all U.S. senators and Congressional representatives within the boundaries of the California Nevada

72 Annual Conference, and the majority and minority leaders of both
73 houses of the legislature in California and Nevada informing them
74 of our action.

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76 **BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that the California-Nevada Annual
77 Conference urge all congregations and individual members to
78 contact their congressional representatives to communicate this
79 message.

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