My name is Maddi Jackson and I am a senior at The Ohio State University. I am majoring in Political Science with specialization in International Relations and I have a double minor in German and Security & Intelligence. I first got involved with Israel Advocacy on campus my sophomore year when I was a senator in Undergraduate Student Government. I was approached by a fellow student who wanted to send me on a trip to Israel over winter break that was specifically for non-Jewish student leaders. I was raised in a conservative and Christian home and had always supported the state of Israel but I never understood why. I decided to go and truly had the most incredible experience. We met with Israelis and Palestinians on every end of the spectrum. I talked to military generals, radicals and peace activists. However, the trip was not just political, it was also very cultural. I went beer tasting in Tel Aviv and swam in the Mediterranean Sea at midnight. I took a jeep tour of the Golan Heights and ate lunch in a Druze village. In Jerusalem, I prayed at the Western Wall and walked the path that Jesus took to the Cross.

However, my favorite part was not even a planned part of the trip. Our tour guide took us to a non-profit hospital that was no bigger than an apartment building. The hospital was owned by Christians, the doctors were Jewish and the patients were Muslim. It was truly the definition of interfaith. The hospital focused on children with fatal heart conditions and would help families in neighboring countries who didn't have health insurance come to Israel for medical care. Nobody cared about the different religions or nationalities or even the language barrier; they all had one goal and that was saving the lives of innocent children. It was the most heartwarming and humbling experience of the entire ten days. It was an experience that I will never forget and it made me very passionate about the work that I now do on campus.

I'm here to talk about the BDS resolution that was presented to the undergraduate student government at Ohio State a few weeks ago. The resolution presented to USG is a rebranding of the BDS movement that started 2 years ago on campus and it is focusing on the D in BDS. It calls for the University to Divest from companies, mostly American, that do business in Israel and are allegedly complicit in human rights violations against Palestinians.

The Resolution was presented to the Undergraduate Student Government on March 9th, and the debate on the issue continued until the vote was concluded during the General Assembly meeting on March 23rd.

During the initial presentation of the resolution, 13 heads of student organizations, including the Muslim Student Associations, International Socialist Organization, and the Coalition for Black Lives Matter to name a few, spoke on the senate stage.

On the one hand, these organizations argued that this resolution is not anti-Israel, it only focuses on human rights and to paraphrase a sentence that was repeated constantly, "this is true because the document says so".

But on the other hand, all night we heard from one student leader after another that Israel is an evil occupying colonial power that profits over the suffering of Palestinians, and that making these claims is completely legitimate because they come from a diverse group, including Jews that support their cause. And because of this fact USG has to support their cry for "justice" or they will accuse USG of stifling minority voices.

The supporters of the Divest resolution amplified their hateful rhetoric until the second debate on the resolution that took place on March 23rd. Their tactics focused on attacking USG senators both on social media, and through the school newspaper. Claiming that their lack of support for the resolution proves to students that they are racist and if USG wants to redeem itself it has to support Divestment. One student tweeted out that he would personally target anyone who did not vote the way he wanted them to.

On the opposite end of this resolution, the Buckeyes for Israel leadership called on students from the Jewish community, and various student organizations we have established relationships with to attend the meeting and show that there is a strong opposition to this resolution. Naturally, much of the pro-Israel community is comprised of Jewish students, but it is important to point out that many of our strongest leaders are not. Israel is not a partisan issue or a religious one. In fact, three Columbus area Congressmen- Pat Tiberi, Steve Stivers, and Joyce Beatty- wrote a bi-partisan letter condemning the BDS movement and urging the senators to vote against the resolution.

Between March 9th and March 23rd we established a three pronged approach.

The first, setting up a panel discussion to educate senators, and the community as a whole, about the negative consequences of divestment.

The second prong was to create a cohesive message for our community to follow. Our message focused on the rise of antisemitism as a result of BDS on college campuses, that this

resolution discriminates against Israel, and that it will destroy future employment opportunities and investments in our University. And lastly we argued that the path to a better future for both Israelis and Palestinians is through mutual understanding and dialog, and that this resolution aims to accomplish the exact opposite.

The third prong focused on directly contacting senators to educate them on the issue, and urge them to vote against the resolution.

After 2 General Assembly meetings and almost 10 hours of debate, the resolution was struck down by USG with only 9 senators voting in favor, 21 voting against, and 15 abstaining.

I would like to end by saying that our community showed immense strength and resilience in the face of hours of difficult accusations both against Israel, and against the pro-Israel community. Hundreds of students spent hours in the senate chamber showing that the opposition to BDS is vibrant, and that we will not back down as long as there is a threat to our community.

Thank you!