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News Release

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver

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Assembly to Introduce Legislation in Response to the American Studies Association Boycott of Israel

Legislation Would Prohibit Use of State Aid By Any College to Fund an Academic Entity That Is Boycotting Certain Countries

In response to the American Studies Association's boycott of Israel and its academic institutions, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver today announced legislation (A.8392) to prohibit colleges and universities from using state aid to fund any academic groups or associations that have passed resolutions or taken official actions to promote discriminatory boycotts.

"Actions such as the American Studies Association's discriminatory boycott of Israel and its academic institutions are a blatant assault on the academic freedoms that New York and its students have come to hold dear," said Silver. "Colleges should not use taxpayer funds to support boycotts, resolutions or any similar actions that are discriminatory and limit academic opportunities."

In addition to prohibiting the use of state aid by a college to fund an academic group – such as the American Studies Association -- if that group has passed a resolution or taken an official action to boycott certain countries or their higher education institutions, this legislation would also prohibit a college engaging in such activity from using state funding to pay membership dues to the association or to reimburse travel or lodging for an employee attending any meeting of such an association.

Colleges violating the ban would not be eligible for state aid during the academic year in which the violation occurs.

The measure applies to those countries hosting a higher education institute chartered by the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents charters institutions located in Israel, Lebanon, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Additionally, to preserve academic freedom, the legislation would not prohibit a college employee from participating with these associations or attending events. Further, it would prohibit a college from making employment decisions as a result of a college employee's decision to attend any event of an academic association engaging in a boycott or attending any such event.