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JCRC Omaha Executive Director Issues Statement on UNL Senate Bill #14

[OMAHA, Nebraska] Sharon Brodkey, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Omaha, issued the following statement after considering the outcome of University of Nebraska Lincoln Senate Bill No. 14:

The passage of Senate Bill #14, a Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) resolution passed by the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska Wednesday night, is deeply disappointing, legally incongruent with state policy, and fundamentally malicious and misguided.

Nebraska has made its position clear through state resolutions and gubernatorial proclamations opposing discriminatory boycotts of Israel. As a public, state-funded institution, neither the administration or student senate of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln can endorse or legitimize actions that contradict state policy. ASUN has no legal authority or influence over foreign policy, and its resolutions carry no legal or diplomatic effect. SB #14 is pure political theater to appease a very small number of activists, some of whom are not even students, to bully and intimidate Jewish and other pro-Israel students.

This action does nothing to help Palestinians in Gaza or elsewhere. It is not intended to advance peace or promote coexistence. Instead, it advances falsehoods and a one-sided narrative that maliciously accuses Israel of apartheid and genocide, implying that Israel is not a legitimate sovereign nation — all allegations that are factually unsupported and legally inaccurate under international law. The misuse of such language inflames tensions and undermines serious human rights discourse.

Most concerning is that ASUN senators chose to dismiss the concerns and testimonies from Jewish and non-Jewish students about the very real and troubling impacts of Senate Bill #14 on campus life, Jewish students and faculty. The bill does not reflect the priorities of the vast majority of students, who expect student government to focus on campus concerns, not symbolic international activism. Rather than uniting the student body, this action deepens division and erodes trust.

Public universities have an obligation to provide a learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. Singling out the Jewish state for condemnation in the current climate predictably contributes to hostility toward Jewish individuals and makes members of the campus community feel unsafe. That consequence cannot be dismissed or ignored.

We are grateful to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln administration and NU Regents for clearly condemning and distancing themselves from this bill, reaffirming that ASUN does not speak for the University on matters of foreign policy. We call on ASUN to reconsider and recommit to protecting the safety, dignity, and equal treatment of Jewish students and all members of the campus community.

***About the Jewish Community Relations Council**:*
Guided by Jewish values, the nonpartisan Jewish Community Relations Council works in common cause with other religious, racial, ethnic, and civic groups to foster a just, democratic, and pluralistic society. The JCRC advocates, educates, collaborates, and mobilizes action on issues important to the Jewish Community and greater community to fight antisemitism and hate in all its forms and promote the security of Israel and Jews everywhere.