

United States Senate

September 13, 2024

Board of Trustees
Brown University
Box 1928
Providence, RI 02912

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees:

Earlier this week, the Wall Street Journal published an opinion piece by the now-former trustee of Brown University, Joseph Edelman, in which he announced his resignation over the board's decision to hold a vote on endorsing the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against the State of Israel. I commend Mr. Edelman for his conviction and willingness to call out the board's action to appease radical anti-Israel protestors who have attempted to take over college campuses across the nation, displayed disgusting antisemitism, and in some cases been violent toward Jewish students.

I strongly believe that colleges and universities that fail to stand up to hate and antisemitism do not deserve to receive federal taxpayer funding, and I am fighting to pass my and Senator Tim Scott's bill, the *Stop Antisemitism on College Campuses Act*, to force consequences on universities like Brown that endanger Jewish students by caving to radical groups, some funded by Iran, that sympathize with Hamas terrorists and wish to destroy the State of Israel.

The BDS movement has been widely criticized for its impact on Jewish students and communities, often fostering an environment where antisemitic attitudes can flourish and spread like wildfire. For Jewish students on campus, the endorsement of such a vile movement proves that antisemitic and anti-Israel views have taken over university leadership. Normalizing views that delegitimize Israel, an American ally and the only true democracy in the Middle East, normalizes and rewards the abhorrent behavior of the anti-Israel protestors, critically undermining Jewish students' sense of security and inclusion within the academic community. This is not merely a matter of institutional policy; it has real, tangible effects on the lives and well-being of students on Brown's campus.

I have long been committed to combating antisemitism and supporting Jewish communities. As governor, I was the first to sign landmark legislation prohibiting BDS in the State of Florida, making it crystal clear that Floridians do not tolerate hatred or antisemitism of any kind. Today, more than a dozen states have followed in Florida's footsteps. I cannot stress enough that this decision by the board to hold such a vote serves as a stark reminder of the imminent threat the BDS movement poses to American values and support for democratic states around the world. Today, violent campus protestors seek to intimidate and silence Brown's Jewish community into subservience. The Brown University board should not be accommodating to them.

I previously expressed my concerns regarding the increasingly aggressive and antisemitic behavior on university campuses around the country in an [open letter](#) to university presidents, where I specifically mentioned my disgust with Brown's preliminary decision to appease the same student activists who promoted violence and antisemitism contrary to university policy. I called on all university presidents to heed my warning and stand firm in the face of these student groups, many of which have undisclosed ties to terrorist organizations and the largest State Sponsor of Terror, the Islamic Republic of Iran. These appeasement policies ultimately send a message to students, citizens and our enemies, quite frankly, that terrorism, hatred and violence lead to results in the United States, while Jewish Americans are increasingly marginalized and unwelcome in their own communities.

Brown University's Student Code of Conduct states that the "Principles of the Brown University Community form the foundation for student conduct expectations at Brown University. The Principles emphasize individual integrity, respect for others, respect for University resources, and respect for the values of teaching, learning and scholarship."¹ But, I do not find these principles to be influencing the board's decision when it bows in submission to a hate movement by treating the demands of those who tout such hatred as legitimate and worthy of consideration. The decision to vote on BDS at Brown University undermines these principles and staggeringly fails to consider the broader implications of such an unprecedented move by an institution of higher education. I urge the board to reconsider this course of action and reaffirm your commitment to fostering a campus environment free from antisemitism and discrimination. I applaud Joseph Edelman for standing up for what is right. Although the vote has not yet occurred, holding it rewards these students for their anti-Israel and

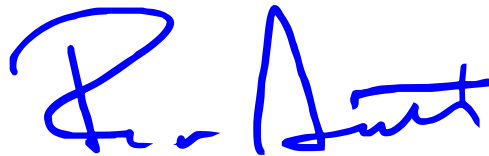
¹ <https://www.brown.edu/offices/student-conduct/about#:~:text=individual%20integrity%2C,teaching%2C%20learning%2C%20and%20scholarship>.

Board of Trustees
September 13, 2024
Page Three

anti-Jewish activism, and that speaks volumes about the board's ability to defend the best interests of the institution as a whole.

It is imperative that academic institutions like Brown University reject all forms of hate and prejudice and punish those who are complicit. By doing so, you will protect your students as well as your reputation and also uphold the values of inclusion and respect that are fundamental to the mission of higher education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator