

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1605 LONGWORTH
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-8045
FAX: (202) 225-9073

CHULA VISTA OFFICE
333 F STREET, SUITE A
CHULA VISTA, CA 91910
(619) 422-5963
FAX: (619) 422-7290

EL CENTRO OFFICE
380 NORTH 8TH STREET, #14
EL CENTRO, CA 92243
(760) 355-8800
FAX: (760) 321-9664

VARGAS.HOUSE.GOV



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas

51st District, California

February 27, 2015

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND
RISK MANAGEMENT

HORTICULTURE, RESEARCH, BIOTECHNOLOGY
AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

President Roger Shultz
Mt. San Jacinto College
1499 North State Street
San Jacinto, CA 92583

Dear President Shultz:

I write to share my concerns regarding anti-Israel activist Miko Peled's upcoming speech at Mt. San Jacinto College. While I strongly support diverse ideas and free speech on our college campuses, I would like to highlight some of the offensive and inaccurate statements and incendiary actions Mr. Peled has made in recent years. I believe an assessment of his words and deeds will allow you and your colleagues to be fully informed of the divisiveness Mr. Peled often brings to educational settings. I urge you and the college's leadership to consider the potential consequences of his speech and to provide a balanced discussion for a true educational opportunity.

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has remained a stalwart ally of the United States and a vibrant democracy in an often hostile region. I have witnessed first-hand the diversity and respect for equality that Israelis share with their American counterparts. While no country is perfect, Israel strives to respect the human rights of all people, particularly as they continue to confront violent extremism in various forms. Israel is frequently the target of hate and is held to a standard not met by most other countries.

This targeted hate has recently transformed itself into the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which is championed by Mr. Peled. BDS seeks to cripple the Israeli economy through various mechanisms at the individual, non-state and governmental level. I have seen the effects of this unfair economic campaign and strongly support Israel as it combats yet another international threat. My experience with the BDS movement has led me to cosponsor legislation aimed at combatting this destructive campaign, while I work to educate members of the community about this issue.

Mr. Peled's stances, statements and base of support should provoke a pause amongst the leadership at your college. He has seriously mischaracterized Israeli actions as "a mission to destroy the Palestinian people," accused Israeli Defense Forces of "ethnic cleansing," and falsely stated that the ongoing peace process is "a process of apartheid and colonization." Because the BDS movement is often promoted and supported on college campuses, his highly inaccurate comments may both mislead students and further incite hatred.

As stated beforehand, an open-dialogue between divergent views, even on an issue as contentious as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is a crucial part of an engaging and multifaceted educational experience. However, I hope my reservations with Mr. Peled's appearance on your

campus will allow for a more fruitful conversation regarding respect and dignity for all cultures. If you and your college leadership ultimately decide to proceed with Mr. Peled's speech, I would encourage you to include another speaker who can serve to balance the discussion and promote an open and fair exchange of ideas that further educates the student body.

Thank you for your time and your consideration and I look forward to working with you in the future. Please free to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns at (202) 225-8045.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Juan" and the last name "Vargas" clearly legible.

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress