

ELANA ZELDEN

Letter to the Editor: Vote No on University
divestment

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After Chancellor Phyllis Wise decided my freshman year that Steven Salaita's hateful speech toward Jewish students and Israel didn't belong here, I never thought I would see such divisiveness here again. Just two years later, hate and divisiveness have reared their ugly heads at the University of Illinois.

A few weeks ago, a campaign called UIUC Divest was introduced to be a referendum on the campus' spring ballot this week. I will be voting NO, and ask you to do the same.

This campaign is devoted to singling out and demonizing Israel, under the larger anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. These campaigns do not help the Palestinians, whom they claim to stand up for. They ignore that the Palestinians are suffering under their own elected governments, whose political agendas supercede all else.

All that has arisen from these campaigns has been the loss of jobs for Palestinians who work in Israeli companies. Furthermore, divestment has ended dialogue between potential future leaders and models of peaceful coexistence. This campaign at our University is disguised as activism against human rights abuses. In reality, it is used as a way to encourage the University to stop investing in companies that invest in Israel such as Caterpillar, Boeing, Nestle, G4S, etc.

Those leading this campaign are ignoring that these same companies give so much to us students in scholarships, internships and employment in different fields. This campaign hurts our campus. It divides us based on our differences, rather than unifying our campus that proudly calls itself "Inclusive Illinois."

I never want to feel this hostile atmosphere pervade this place I call home. Going forward, we need to stand by our values and work together to recognize diversity, promote dialogue and unite our community.

On March 8-9, join me and vote NO on divestment.
Elana Zelden is a student in LAS.