

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Label: SGAR-61011

Date introduced: April 17th, 2024

Author(s): Students for Justice in Palestine HTX

Sponsor(s): UHBDS Coalition of which contains 20+ organizations (Young Democratic Socialists of America, Muslim Student Association, Deeds not Words, Ahlul-Bayt Student Organization, Arab Student Association, UH English Advocacy, Scholars Against the War on Palestine, Architecture Lobby, Association of Latinx/Hispanic Advocates and Allies, Students for a Democratic Society)

Draft: Vote

Condemning Executive Order No. GA-44

Whereas, on March 27, 2024, the Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott, issued Executive Order No. GA-44, which is an intimidation tactic aimed at suppressing the free speech of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Palestinian Solidarity Committee (PSC) chapters on Texas public campuses;

Whereas, Executive Order No. GA-44 directs Texas public universities to “review and update free speech policies” to limit free speech, academic freedom, and student activism;

Whereas, Executive Order No. GA-44 specifically names Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) chapters and labels them as targets that should be “disciplined for violating these policies”;

Whereas, the State of Texas is legally and ethically bound to uphold First Amendment rights, and Executive Order GA-44 blatantly violates these rights, namely the right to freedom of speech, the right to assemble, and the right to expression through protest;

Whereas, Executive Order No. GA-44 endangers students advocating for the end to the genocide of Palestinians—endangering Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students in particular—by creating a hostile environment that suppresses free speech;

Whereas, the University of Houston explicitly states their goal in the Freedom of Expression Policy Purpose and Scope that “The University of Houston is committed to fostering a learning environment where free inquiry and expression are encouraged”;

Whereas, the University of Houston Student Government Association’s 58th administration passed SGAR-58001, Protection and Support of Pro-Palestine Students and Activism Resolution, affirming that “speech, action, protest, and campaigns—including the pursuit and support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel—as well as the existence of Palestinian solidarity organizing and other expressions of Palestinian freedom on campus is a protected right at the University of Houston”;

Whereas, SGAR-58001 states that the University of Houston Student Government Association “unequivocally rejects the debasement of Palestinian activism through the false conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism”;

Whereas, numerous faculty of the University of Houston have expressed their support of the right of students to speak out for Palestine through signing “UH Faculty Against Censorship Statement”;

Whereas, SGAR-58001 called on UH Administration “to issue a public statement affirming the right of students to organize and advocate for Palestine ” in the summer of 2021, yet UH Administration has not issued a statement since.

Therefore, be it resolved by the Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

The University of Houston Student Government Association condemns Executive Order GA-44 and will protect students’ speech, actions, protests, and campaigns—including the pursuit of BDS against Israel—as well as the existence of Palestinian solidarity organizing and other expressions of Palestinian freedom.

Be it further resolved, the University of Houston Student Government Association calls on UH Administration to refuse to comply with the Executive Order;

Be it further resolved, the University of Houston Student Government Association rejects the false conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-semitism;

Be it further resolved, the University of Houston Student Government Association calls on UH Administration to release a public statement condemning the Executive Order and reaffirming the constitutional right to free speech of students to speak out for Palestine;

Let it be resolved, the University of Houston Student Government Association calls on UH Administration to protect its students' right to speech, action, protest, and campaigns through.



Sebastian Ballesteros
Speaker of the Senate

Date of Senate Approval: 04-29-2024