Myths and Facts about the Mass Against HP coalition and proposed resolution
April 24, 2018

The Massachusetts Against Hewlett-Packard (MAHP) campaign calls on the city of Cambridge and municipalities across the state to cut ties with Hewlett Packard Incorporated (HP Inc.) and Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE), until the companies fully and publically terminate corporate complicity in the Israeli violence against Palestinians, U.S. deportation and detention of immigrants, and mass incarceration. Part of the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement, the campaign in Cambridge is led by a coalition of 35 progressive organizations*, almost all based in Cambridge or with significant membership in Cambridge. Over 2,500 locals have signed a petition in support of the resolution, and 50 Rabbis, Cantors, and Rabbinical students have declared their support.

Opponents of the growing Cambridge-based campaign to boycott HPE and HP Inc have undertaken a campaign of misrepresentation and misinformation to distract Cambridge, MA residents and decision-makers from the facts. We wish to set the record straight on Hewlett-Packard, the Massachusetts Against HP Campaign (MAHP), and the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).

Myth:
“The Cambridge City Council is Cynically and Irresponsibly Avoiding Open Public Debate … members of the Cambridge City Council have been in private conversation with MAHP for months about their resolution, but at the request of MAHP have not shared it with the public.”
(AJC, ADL, and JCRC, April 15)

Fact:
Members of the City Council have engaged in private conversations with both supporters and detractors of this resolution for over a month, hearing and weighing the opinions and concerns of both groups. Over this period of time, some members of the City Council have deliberated over drafts of a resolution that would call for an end to public spending on HP Inc and HPE. It is standard practice for the Cambridge City Council to make the wording of resolutions available for public view only the Thursday before they are heard. There is no
precedent for the ADL, AJC, and JCRC’s claim that the City Council has an obligation to make
the resolution public earlier than that date.

**Myth:**
*Passing this resolution would constitute “Singling Out Israel and Holding It to a Unique Ethical Standard”* (AJC, ADL, and JCRC, April 15)

**Fact**
The Cambridge City Council regularly speaks out about human rights violations locally and
around the world - including in individual countries. Just three weeks ago, City Councilors
passed a *resolution condemning the actions of the crowned prince of Saudi Arabia*. The Council
and City have taken action in response to human rights abuses in El Salvador, Guatemala,
Haiti, and in response to apartheid in South Africa. In actuality, Massachusetts Against Hewlett
Packard is asking the Council to hold the Israeli government to the *same standard* of
respecting human rights to which the city has repeatedly held governments around the world,
*rather than dramatically lowering this standard in Israel’s case.*

**Myth:**
*The Cambridge City Council cannot boycott HPE and HP Inc. because the council has passed a
policy order establishing a relationship between the City of Cambridge and the City of
Dongguan, China, because “Dongguan is a toy manufacturing center that has produced toys for
Disney, Mattel and others in factories that, according to China Labor Watch, allow a wide range
of labor rights violations.”* (AJC, ADL, and JCRC, April 15)

**Fact:**
MAHP would fully support an investigation into the City’s relationship between Cambridge and
Dongguan, China. However, our opponents are highlighting this legitimate human rights issue in
China in an attempt to silence our campaigns’ advocacy for human rights in the United States
and Israel/Palestine. This is harmful to the Palestinians, immigrants, and Black and Brown
people whose cause our opponents are attempting to silence. It is offensive to people enduring
human rights abuses in Dongguan China, whose suffering the ADL, AJC, and JCRC are
instrumentalizing. We ask why the ADL, AJC, and JCRC have waited until this moment to
take up the cause of international labor violations.

**Myth:**
*“BDS resolutions like the one under consideration contribute to polarization, not peace. They
undermine those who are seeking to build bridges and empower those who reject co-existence.
They are warfare by another means.”* (AJC, ADL, and JCRC, April 15)

**Fact:**
Opponents of Palestinian rights are waging a heavily-funded national campaign to combat Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), a Palestinian-led movement and tactic that is succeeding in holding Israel accountable for human rights violations. Here’s what they don’t want you to know.

1. **Boycotts are integral to American democracy.** Boycott is a time-honored democratic tactic – from the Boston Tea Party, to the Montgomery bus boycott, to the fight against South African apartheid, farm workers’ struggles, and the fight for LGBT rights, boycotts have been key in the fight for justice.

2. **BDS supports upholding international law.** Israel’s settlement policies are in clear violation of the 1907 Hague Regulations and the 4th Geneva Conventions of 1949. The occupation of Palestinian land is growing rapidly with ever-increasing settlement construction.

3. **BDS does NOT call for the destruction of Israel.** BDS calls for a just society for both Israelis and Palestinians. It seeks to encourage the government of Israel to comply with international law and UN resolutions. The rule of law is a fundamental principle of democracy and compliance with international humanitarian law is in the best interests of BOTH Palestinians and Israelis.

4. **BDS is NOT anti-Jewish or antisemitic.** The BDS movement holds among its core principles a commitment to inclusiveness and opposition to discrimination in all its forms, including antisemitism. BDS is explicitly anti-racist. The global BDS movement, which includes Jews of conscience, has consistently adopted a rights-based approach and anti-racist platform that rejects all forms of racism, including antisemitism. Calling BDS anti-Semitic is a smokescreen tactic used to deflect legitimate criticism of Israeli human rights violations.