

B”H

September 6, 2024

Dear Colleagues and Members of the Advisory Committee on University Resources Management,

As spiritual and institutional leaders of the Jewish community at Brown University, each with deep commitments to the flourishing of our pluralistic, learning-centered, and compassionate campus ecosystem, and each representing different Jewish denominational orientations, we urge you to vote against any proposal that would have the University divest from companies that support the State of Israel’s national security.

Many arguments against divestment will have already been shared with the Committee. Wanting to share something additive from our perspective as student life professionals and spiritual care providers, we appreciate the opportunity to say:

- The (years) long divestment push is a source of considerable and inescapable internal stress and despair for Jewish students – and for the community as a whole. The violence of anti-Israel rhetoric directed at Jewish students on campus is something that no minority community should be expected to sustain – and, in fact, we feel a grave double standard has been applied, permitting this abusive rhetoric at the cost of the emotional and communal well being of Jewish students.
- While the past years have seen a wonderful growth of Jewish life at Brown – and significant University investment in the infrastructure to support Jewish observance – any advancement of divestment will immediately ricochet and damage Brown’s ability to sustain a diverse and vibrant Jewish community, and will take Brown off of the small list of “safe” schools for observant Jewish students in North America.

Thank you for considering our voices in your deliberation.

With wishes for blessing upon our entire community,

Rabbi Josh Bolton, Executive Director, Brown RISD Hillel
Rabbi Mendel Laufer, Director, Chabad of College Hill