

A Resolution to Establish a Committee to Investigate OSU’s Investments in Companies Complicit in Human Rights Violations

Savannah Sockwell (for herself, Curtis Pierson, Salma Shire, Nate Smith, Halima Mohamed, Emma Meersman, Kinza Sami, Alexis McKenzie, Anthony Long, Shukri Ahmed, Paige Bennett, and Safiyo Mohamud) introduced to following resolution to the Steering Committee, where it passed.

* * *

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas the Office of Investments at The Ohio State University manages \$4.2 billion in endowment funds and \$7.1 billion in University assets,¹ and

Whereas 14.1% of University assets is contributed by student tuition and fees,¹ and

Whereas OSU invests these endowment funds, including student tuition, in numerous entities to maximize financial returns to support the educational and research goals of the university,² and

Whereas information about Ohio State’s specific investments is claimed to be exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act on the basis of Ohio’s Uniform Trade Secrets Act,³ and

Whereas all students should have the right, as tuition-paying members of the Buckeye community, to critically review and examine the ethics of the University’s financial investments, and

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government unanimously passed a resolution in 2016 recognizing its constituents’ call for deeper transparency in the financial investments of The Ohio State University,⁴ and

¹ The Ohio State University - Statistical Summary (Autumn 2017)

² Investment, 590 University Policy

³ State ex rel. Besser v. Ohio State Univ., 87 Ohio St.3d 535 (“Besser I”) and 89 Ohio St.3d 396 (“Besser II”)

⁴ A Resolution to Support Increased Transparency of Investments at The Ohio State University

37 **Whereas** students are still concerned that OSU may be invested in the following
38 companies: the GEO group, CCA/CoreCivic, HP Enterprise, and
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40 **Whereas** the aforementioned companies contradict the University’s values of integrity
41 and accountability by engaging in practices that violate human rights both domestically
42 and internationally,⁵ and
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44 **Whereas** the United Nations defines “Human Rights” as “the right to life and liberty,
45 freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work
46 and education, and many more,”⁶ and
47
48 **Whereas** these rights are to be afforded to all human beings regardless of race, religion,
49 ethnicity, or sex,⁷ and
50
51 **Whereas** Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) / CoreCivic and GEO Group profit
52 from the growth private prisons and mass incarcerations in the United States, and
53
54 **Whereas** the prison industrial complex benefits at the expense of black and brown lives
55 with an average of 1 in 3 black men and 1 in 6 Latino men spending time behind bars
56 during their life compared to 1 in 17 white men and black men spending an average of 29
57 percent longer behind bars than their white peers for the same crimes,⁸ and
58
59 **Whereas** the number of women in prison has grown by over 800% in the past three
60 decades and two-thirds of incarcerated women in the U.S. are women of color,⁹ and
61
62 **Whereas** mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex are entities that thrive on
63 and perpetuate racism and injustice,¹⁰ and
64
65 **Whereas** persistent violations of detention standards in private prisons,¹¹ including
66 abuses against women, children,¹² and inmates with mental disabilities,¹³ have been
67 documented by Human Rights Watch and other organizations, and
68

⁵ [OSU Mission, Values, and Core Goals](#)

⁶ [UN- Human Rights](#)

⁷ [Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity & Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy 1.10](#)

⁸ [Why For-Profit Prisons House More Inmates Of Color](#)

⁹ [Focus Brief: Women in Prison](#)

¹⁰ [Racism and Reflections On Prison Industrial Complex](#)

¹¹ [US Justice Department Ends Use of Private Prisons](#)

¹² [The Shame of America’s Family Detention Camps](#)

¹³ [Use of Force against Inmates with Mental Disabilities in US Jails and Prisons](#)

69 **Whereas** unsafe and unsanitary conditions, including lack of immediate access to
70 running water for hydration, showers or the use of a toilet, were documented at one of
71 CCA’s privately-run prisons in Ohio,¹⁴ and
72
73 **Whereas** CCA / CoreCivic and GEO Group have emerged as the main corporate
74 beneficiaries of immigrant detention policies and operate nine out of ten of the largest
75 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers,¹⁵ and
76
77 **Whereas** HP Enterprise also profits from global mass incarceration by providing the
78 essential infrastructure for state and private prisons as well as the technology to track
79 prisoner data which is used to discriminate against formerly incarcerated persons years
80 after their release,¹⁶ and
81
82 **Whereas** HP Enterprise profits from mass deportation by providing technology for ICE
83 to track, raid, detain, and deport undocumented immigrants, including students,
84 separating them from their livelihoods and families,¹⁷ and
85
86 **Whereas** companies profiting from devastation are complicit in the perpetration of
87 human suffering, and
88
89 **Whereas** investment in such companies engaged in violence against others is harmful to
90 the OSU community, particularly minority students who come from, or have family in
91 regions which have experienced military occupation, systematic discrimination, death,
92 injury, and other forms of human rights violations, and
93
94 **Whereas** the core goals of President Drake’s 2020 Vision is for Ohio State to “be a
95 national model of inclusiveness and diversity” and to be a “leading light along the arc
96 toward greater inclusion,”¹⁸ and
97
98 **Whereas** the Undergraduate Student Government continually expresses its commitment
99 to “support, protect, and advocate for the safety and success of all students, with a strong
100 emphasis on marginalized groups,”¹⁹ and
101
102 **Whereas** as long as a portion of the University’s endowment fund is invested in
103 companies that violate human rights, Arab, Black and Latino students, as minority groups

¹⁴ Auditors uncover problems at private prisons in Ohio

¹⁵ Payoff: How Congress Ensures Private Prison Profit with an Immigrant Detention Quota

¹⁶ Hewlett Packard Enterprise

¹⁷ Hewlett-Packard’s Role in Oppression, from South Africa to Palestine to Massachusetts

¹⁸ 2020 Vision

¹⁹ Diversity & Inclusion Role and Mission

104 on campus do not receive the University’s full support, nor the benefits of its
105 commitment to foster a more inclusive campus, and
106
107 **Whereas** the sponsors of this resolution are committed to promoting dignity and respect
108 for all people, and emphasize that the request contained herein is not an attack on any
109 particular identity or a sweeping criticism of any nation but rather is meant as an
110 acknowledgement of concerns marginalized students on campus have regarding
111 university investments in unethical corporate practices abroad, and
112
113 **Whereas** undergraduate student governments all across the nation, including but not
114 limited to, Columbia University,²⁰ Hampshire College,²¹ University of California-Davis,
115 University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Los Angeles, University of
116 California-San Diego, University of California-Santa Cruz, University of California-
117 Irvine, University of California-Riverside,²² Stanford University,²³ DePaul University,²⁴
118 Oberlin College,²⁵ University of Toledo²⁶ and Northwestern University²⁷ — have passed
119 resolutions calling for the divestment from companies engaged in human rights
120 violations, and
121
122 **Whereas** fellow Big Ten school University of Michigan recently passed a similar
123 resolution calling to establish an ad hoc committee to investigate divestment from
124 companies that are complicit in human rights violations,²⁸ and
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126 **Whereas** OSU students have previously sought to promote the withdrawal of University
127 funds from corporations engaged in unethical business practices which demonstrate a
128 lack of accountability, ethicality, and respect for the rights and dignity of others, most
129 notably from companies doing business with apartheid South Africa²⁹ and Sudan,³⁰ and
130
131 **Whereas** the Undergraduate Student Government has set a precedent for pursuing
132 socially responsible investments with the passage of resolution 50-R-24 to divest from
133 the top 200 Fossil Fuel Companies and Energy Transfer Partners,³¹

²⁰ [Columbia University Divests From Prisons](#)

²¹ [Hampshire Amends Investment Policy, Excluding Private Prison Industry](#)

²² [ASUCD Divestment Bill Passes through Senate](#)

²³ [Senate Reverses Divestment Vote, Passes Resolution](#)

²⁴ [DePaul Students Vote for Divestment](#)

²⁵ [Oberlin College Passes Divestment Resolution](#)

²⁶ [University of Toledo Passes Divestment Resolution By A Landslide](#)

²⁷ [Northwestern University Passes Divestment](#)

²⁸ [UMDivest resolution passes for first time in U-M Ann Arbor campus history](#)

²⁹ [Colleges Moving to Divest South African Investments](#)

³⁰ [Cutting Ties With Darfur](#)

³¹ [A Resolution to Remove Investments from Top 200 Fossil Fuel Corporations, Energy Transfer Partners, and Duke Energy](#)

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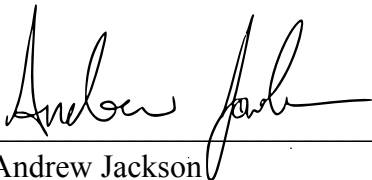
Therefore, Let it Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government calls for the formation of an ad hoc committee, consisting of faculty, students and staff within the University Senate, to investigate the ethical and moral implications of investments including the aforementioned companies which are involved in human rights violations both within the U.S. and abroad, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government supports appropriate action as deemed fit by the established committee, if deemed appropriate by the ad hoc committee following a thorough investigation, from the aforementioned companies and including any other companies involved in human rights violations, as soon as divestment may be accomplished, but not later than one year after the date of engagement, and

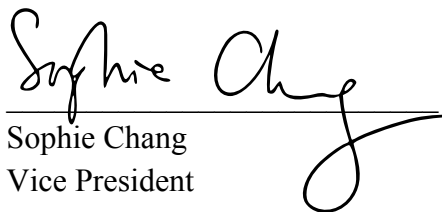
Let it Further Be Resolved that the ad hoc committee, in conjunction with divestment find suitable investments in companies deemed socially responsible by said committee, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that upon of this resolution, the request presented herein shall embody OSU’s commitment to social justice and equality for all people, and affirms that no people are exempt from this commitment.

Floor Vote: Passed



Andrew Jackson
President



Sophie Chang
Vice President

Date Adopted: January 24, 2018

Date Terminated: _____