

Letters

Columnist unfairly attacked UIndy student for activism

Arab and Muslim college student activists are under attack.

If they show solidarity with the people of Palestine and call for an end to the Israeli occupation, their activities are scrutinized and they are harassed. Across the country, these student activists have been called "terrorists" or "anti-Semitic" for their criticism of Israel.

In Indianapolis, our college students are not immune to these attacks. Last spring, a student on IUPUI's campus endured defamation of her name on campus and online because of her activism to support Palestine. On June 18, IBJ posted an opinion piece [Maurer: Student sacrifices integrity to win vote] that was a personal attack on one student organizer at University of Indianapolis, Zak Mitiche, a star athlete and Fulbright Scholar, had his character and integrity attacked simply because his organization called for the Student Senate to pass a non-binding resolution to divest from corporations that are complicit in violations of international law and oppression of the Palestinian people.

A personal attack published in IBJ is no different than an anonymous online threat. The students who are engaged in this work are no different than any other college student with deeply held beliefs. The individuals who launch these attacks against student activists hope they will buckle and decide it's no longer worth engaging in this work.

Instead of launching personal attacks on our city's future leaders, let's support them. Community leaders like Mickey Maurer should nurture young leaders with passion and innovative ideas, not criticize them for their deeply held beliefs and hard work. Indianapolis needs young people like Zak Mitiche who feel a responsibility for making our community, and our world, a more just and better place.

*Erin Polley,
coordinator of Indiana Peacebuilding Program
American Friends Service Committee*