Dear Representatives of the 6th Assembly,

I am issuing a veto of Assembly Resolution (A.R.) 6-034, “A Resolution To Sponsor Lunches Promoting Positive Action and Dialogue Regarding The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” My reasoning is below:

First and foremost, I do not believe that it is the place of the CSG Assembly to wade into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By funding lunches to discuss this global issue, we are enlarging the scope of our reach far beyond what it should be. The overarching purpose of our organization is to address pressing student issues and concerns that have a direct and unambiguous connection to campus, such as mental health, sexual assault prevention, sustainability, and the rights of undocumented students. We are best served, and our resources are most efficiently utilized, when we are faithful to this mission.

Second, I remain concerned by the absence of sponsorship by students who were proponents of A.R. 6-018, namely members of Student Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE). This is a telling concern that, in my opinion, was flippantly disregarded by many members of the Assembly. As the student government that seeks to represent every Michigan student, our most important job is fostering an inclusive culture, both within and outside of CSG. By advancing this Resolution without weighing the concerns of students in SAFE or any other student who might take issue with this Resolution, we are neglecting this foundational goal. While I do very much appreciate the author's good faith attempts to gain support from a diverse cross-section of students, this conspicuous absence of support is enough reason for me to veto this Resolution.

Third, there are many unanswered questions about the structure of these events, namely who will moderate this dialogue to ensure that students feel comfortable enough not only to attend, but also to make their voices heard during the lunches. I believe that only a surface-level consideration was given to this point. Line 9 of the Resolution is indication of this, with a three-word parenthetical phrase, “with a mediator,” referenced to presumably assuage any issues on this point. Additionally, as was discussed by some Assembly Representatives during 1st and 2nd reads, this event is closed not only to most CSG members, but also to the general public. Funding from the CSG Assembly Legislative Discretionary Fund should, at the very least, go to events and programs of which its own members can take advantage.

In the end, I hope you derive this from my message: I support dialogue between students on this issue. I understand this conflict engenders many different, often conflicting perspectives. That said, without reservation or hesitation, I do not believe that the CSG Assembly and the
Legislative Discretionary Fund are the appropriate vehicles to drive dialogue and promote understanding on this issue. With all of this in mind, I have decided to veto A.R. 6-034.

To end, I suggest that the authors utilize a student organization, some of which certainly deal more closely with this issue than CSG, and apply for funding from the Student Organization Funding Commission (SOFC) to further this endeavor.

Sincerely,

David Schafer
President, Central Student Government