

Helfaer
Community Services
Building
1360 North
Prospect Avenue
Milwaukee
Wisconsin 53202
Phone 276-7920
Saul Sorrin
Executive Director

Milwaukee Jewish Council



TO: Community Leadership
FROM: Dr. Louis Kagen, President
DATE: April 26, 1977
SUBJ: Arab Boycott

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On Thursday, April 21, 1977, the House of Representatives approved legislation to deal with the Arab boycott of Israel in the United States. The measure received even stronger support in the House than was anticipated - 364 ayes and 43 nays. The House Bill is somewhat stronger than the Senate version passed earlier and the two bills now go to a House Senate Committee to work out differences. The major provisions of the House Bill are as follows:

1. Prohibits any act of compliance with a boycott of a country friendly to the U. S. which was "taken or agreed to be taken pursuant to an agreement with, a requirement of, or a request from or on behalf of the boycotting country."
2. Prohibits "refraining" from doing business with a boycotted country (or with any other person because of boycott reasons).
3. Prohibits "refraining from employing or otherwise discriminating against any U. S. person on the basis of race, religion, sex or national origin" or from "furnishing information" with respect to such matters.
4. Prohibits "furnishing information" about business relationships for a boycotted country. Thus, American firms may not provide information to Arab states about whether they do business with Israel.
5. Prohibits furnishing information about whether a person has contributed to a charity which supports a boycotted country. Thus, a firm may not provide information about contributions to UJA or similar activities.

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6. Prohibits handling letters of credit which contain boycott-related conditions. This prevents banks from accepting for commercial processing any letter of credit which includes boycott-related terms.
7. Prohibits broadly any use of "a foreign person including a subsidiary or affiliate in order to circumvent" the provisions of the bill. Thus any effort which can be demonstrated as intended to evade the statute by use of a foreign surrogate in any form becomes a violation of its terms.

Congressman Clement Zablocki played a key role in the successful effort to pass effective Federal boycott legislation in the House. Earlier, the House Foreign Relations Committee which he chairs approved the measure by a 33 - 0 vote.

Congressman Zablocki stood fast against scare tactics of opponents of the anti-boycott legislation who took two full page advertisements in the Wall Street Journal suggesting that the legislation might cost 500,000 jobs in the United States. Mr. Zablocki dismissed that plan as "sheer nonsense and the worst sort of scare tactics".

Mr. Zablocki received many expressions of support for the anti-boycott legislation. We attach a letter from Hal C. Kuehl, Chairman of the Board of the First Wisconsin National Bank, to Congressman Zablocki in which he expresses support of Federal legislation to deal with the Arab boycott. He cites "as a reasoned approach" the agreement between the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Business Roundtable on Federal legislation. Mr. Kuehl's letter to Mr. Zablocki is an outgrowth of a meeting of Milwaukee Jewish Council and ADL representatives with him.

The overwhelming vote in the House of Representatives to counter the Arab boycott is a ringing and most significant declaration in favor of the principle of fair play in American economic affairs. It is also a blow against the campaign of economic warfare being carried on by the Arabs and their supporters against the State of Israel. Congressman Zablocki and Senator Proxmire have given strong leadership in the Congress toward securing passage of the anti-boycott legislation. We urge that you send them a message expressing your congratulations and support. Their addresses are:

Congressman Clement J. Zablocki
Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Room 2184
Washington, D.C. 20515

U.S. Senator William Proxmire
Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Room 2311
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Encl.