



JCRC Statement on H. Res 246

July 29, 2019

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation applauds last week's overwhelmingly bipartisan passage of Congressional House Resolution 246, by a vote of 398 to 17, that opposes efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel through the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement targeting Israel.

We are grateful for the strong bipartisan support of most of Wisconsin's congressional delegation. Special thanks to Representatives Duffy, Gallagher, Grothman, Kind, Sensenbrenner, and Steil for their co-sponsorship.

H. Res. 246 reflects the broad consensus of American public opinion and was supported by Jewish organizations across the spectrum, including not only AIPAC, but also J Street, Ameinu, National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Partners for Progressive Israel (PPI) and Reconstructing Judaism.

The resolution: "1) opposes the Global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement (BDS Movement) targeting Israel"; "2) urges Israelis and Palestinians to return to direct negotiations"; and "3) reaffirms its strong support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in two states—a democratic Jewish State of Israel, and a viable, democratic Palestinian state—living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition."

The call to boycott or divest from Israel stands out as singular in today's America; no other foreign nation, even those responsible for horrific human rights abuses, are targeted by a movement that spans churches, unions, professional association, and municipalities. It represents a disproportionate focus on Israel and should have Americans wondering why some deem it acceptable to ignore nations that commit actual genocide while they aim their righteous ire on the world's sole Jewish state.

The JCRC is disappointed that Reps. Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan were among only 17 members who voted no. Throughout its history, the JCRC has championed the First Amendment, and appreciates Representatives Moore and Pocan's concerns. However, the resolution does nothing to limit free speech.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee's fact sheet on this resolution notes: "Any individuals who want to express themselves in any way—by criticizing a government or country, or by choosing to purchase or not purchase a product—are absolutely guaranteed that right under the First Amendment." According to the FAC, "H. Res. 246 rejects the false choice between the right to criticize—our sacred right to free speech—and support for a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians," it explains, "The overwhelming majority of Congress believes in both, and this resolution is a testament to that fact."

We note that Rep. Moore's and Pocan's statements about the resolution, though far short of our expected expression of support for Jewish Americans and a safe State of Israel, do make clear their opposition to the BDS movement and support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We note that Rep. Moore rightly places the obligation of all parties – both Israelis and Palestinians, as well as Americans – to take steps toward peace.

Moving forward, the JCRC will continue to work with all members of our Congressional delegation to underscore the critical role Congress performs in fostering efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is still best achieved through a two-state solution and the return to direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

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The JCRC speaks as the representative of the Jewish community on issues of public affairs and public policy by convening and mobilizing the Jewish community through education, advocacy, social justice, and support for Israel. Its Community Council includes representatives of 21 constituent organizations and synagogues, reflecting community consensus on issues of shared concern.