



Support Freedom and Justice in the U.S. & Palestine/Israel: Oppose S. Res. 120

The US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR), a national coalition of hundreds of groups working towards freedom, justice, and equality, strongly **urges members of Congress not to cosponsor or vote for [S. Res. 120](#)** because the resolution **lends legitimacy to attacks on First Amendment-protected free speech for social justice, undermines efforts to work towards human rights and a just peace, and gives the right-wing government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a close ally of President Trump, the green light to continue attacks on Palestinians.**

S. Res. 120 was introduced in the midst of the right-wing American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) lobbying conference, and an Israeli elections season characterized by a rising far-right and [blatant racism against Palestinians](#). The resolution condemns a grassroots movement that aims to hold Israel accountable so that Palestinians can gain freedom, justice, and equality—at the same time as Israeli violence against Palestinians is on the rise. It neglects to take the rights-based approach, the only politically tenable, values-based path to a just peace and safety for all in Palestine/Israel.

1) Oppose S. Res. 120 to protect the First Amendment-protected right to boycott for social justice.

- As Palestine Legal has [noted](#), “The Supreme Court has held that ‘speech on public issues occupies the highest rung of the hierarchy of First Amendment values, and is entitled to special protection.’” [[NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co., 458 U.S. 886, 911](#) (1982)]. The Court has specifically held that political boycotts, like boycotts for Palestinian rights, racial justice, or gun safety, are unquestionably protected under the First Amendment. [Id.]
- **Boycott is a tried and tested social justice tactic to challenge racism and advance freedom and justice by peaceful means.** From MoveOn’s [recent call to boycott AIPAC’s policy conference](#) on the grounds of opposing right-wing racism and supporting peace, to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, to the boycott of apartheid South Africa, boycotts advance political, social, and economic change and are an exercise of the First Amendment. Today, the ACLU is litigating for, and [winning](#), the right to boycott for freedom and justice for Palestinians.
- **S. Res. 120 seeks to delegitimize the use of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) tactics—which are modeled on the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and seek Palestinian freedom, justice, and equality.** The call to put economic pressure on Israel until it ends its denial of Palestinian rights was made in 2005 by a coalition of more than 170 Palestinian civil society groups. It upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity. This call has been embraced by religious institutions, trade unions, academic associations, student governments, and prominent cultural figures across the globe, including by Jewish individuals and groups both in Israel and other countries.
- **S. Res. 120 is part of a contemporary pattern of right-wing repression and attempts to limit our constitutionally-protected right to protest injustice.** The resolution legitimizes legislation that penalizes criticism of Israeli policy and represses the grassroots movement for Palestinian rights.

According to the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, [35 states](#) have considered bills that restrict the right to protest.

2) Oppose S. Res. 120 to support freedom and justice in the face of authoritarianism.

- **S. Res. 120 condemns a movement that aims to hold Israel accountable so that Palestinians can gain freedom, justice, and equality—at the same time that Israeli violence against Palestinians is on the rise.** Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are now facing Israeli airstrikes after marching for their freedom for over a year to lethal Israeli response: UN investigators counted [189 people killed](#) and 6,100 wounded by Israeli sniper fire. Palestinian citizens of Israel face [discrimination codified in 65+ laws](#), not least the [Israeli Nation-State Law](#) which anchors racism and second-class status, and blatant incitement from leading candidates running in the April 9 election. In the West Bank, Palestinians have faced an uptick in Israel’s demolitions of their homes and schools, abuse of those held as political prisoners, restricted access to Al Aqsa mosque compound, increasing attacks by settlers, and waves of nightly arrest raids. All this violence is part of Israel’s separate-and-unequal regime, with one system for Israeli Jews and a matrix of control and domination for Palestinians. This resolution gives that ongoing violence the green light by uncritically and unconditionally supporting the right-wing Israeli government’s policies.
- **Supporters of freedom and justice must apply those values to the Palestinian people. Supporting Palestinian rights to freedom, justice, and equality is an inextricable part of the progressive agenda,** while supporting the Israeli government’s ongoing denial of Palestinian rights through separate-and-unequal policies is an inextricable part of the conservative agenda.

3) Oppose S. Res. 120 to open space for a politically tenable pathway to peace through human rights, international law, and advancing freedom and justice.

- **Currently, U.S. policy makes us complicit in Israel’s oppression of the Palestinian people.** Supporters of justice for all should insist that the U.S. ensure that its current policies hold Israel accountable, as required under U.S. law, to human rights standards. By enshrining discrimination, the Israeli government not only denies Palestinian rights, but also undermines human rights norms guaranteeing the fundamental equality of all people. In the era of rising global authoritarianism, **progressives must promote a coherent alternative vision that secures equal rights for Palestinians and advances global justice for all.**
- **In the context of ongoing Israeli violations of Palestinian rights and in the absence of any calls for accountability, progressives must support a rights-based approach as the only politically tenable, values-based path to a just peace and safety for all in Palestine/Israel.** After 25 years of fruitless negotiations, increasing Israeli colonization of Palestinian land, and [bold statements](#) by Israeli prime ministers promising that no Palestinian state will be established, it is clear that Israel has never and will never offer Palestinians a sovereign state. Progressives know that political paradigms and partition necessarily compromise on human rights. We demand a rights-first approach, because only when the equal rights of all people are protected can a just political solution emerge. Only Palestinians and Israelis can determine their political arrangement, but the U.S. has a role to play by using our considerable political, economic, and military investment in Israeli-Palestinian issues to pivot from enabling oppression to supporting human rights.