

Dear Representative _____:

We are writing to express our adamant opposition to HB 2617, the Israel Boycott Divestments bill. This bill is an anti-democratic, time and money-wasting, slap in the face to valid human rights concerns.

We are a coalition of social justice, faith-based, community, and labor organizations working on issues in Arizona and abroad. We take seriously the grave concerns that have been raised about Israel's human rights record and oppose Israel's continued illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As has been recognized by every single Presidential administration of both parties since Lyndon B. Johnson, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories is a threat to regional and world stability and peace.

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement is a non-violent call from Palestinian civil society to the world. It seeks to promote a just peace in Israel and Palestine through non-violent, economic pressure. Some of our groups have endorsed BDS, others merely support the democratic right to do so. We reject Speaker Gowan's assertion that BDS is inherently anti-Semitic; BDS does not target Jewish or Israeli individuals on the basis of their identity, and some prominent Jewish organizations such as Jewish Voice for Peace support BDS.

HB 2617 proposes to restrict the freedom of businesses to make decisions based on their own valid moral and financial concerns. It does so through a time-consuming process that wastes taxpayer dollars to create an annual blacklist of companies that endorse BDS. In exempting Israel from legitimate criticism, it explicitly protects Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories. While at this point this bill might not affect Arizona business contracts, since the primary endorsers of BDS have been churches (the Presbyterian Church-USA, the Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, among others) and universities, it will likely have a chilling effect. Anti-BDS bills proposed in other states and at the federal level attack free speech and defund institutions that engage in legitimate criticism of U.S. foreign policy – we don't want that in our state.

For these reasons, we hope you will think critically and vote NO on HB 2617 and any other anti-BDS bills. Please protect our freedom to exercise our values through our economic choices.

Respectfully submitted,

American Friends Service Committee- Arizona
YWCA-Southern Arizona
Jewish Voice for Peace – Tucson
End Streamline Coalition
Southern Arizona BDS Network
Tucson Samaritans
UA Students for Justice in Palestine
No More Deaths
Borderlands Interfaith Leaders For Justice
Coalicion de Derechos Humanos

Sustainable Nations Development Project
National Lawyers Guild – Southern Arizona

\Alliance for Global Justice
UA Jewish Voice for Peace
Pima Area Labor Federation
Women's Intl League for Peace and Freedom
Showing Up for Racial Justice
Tucson Rising Tide
Occupy Tucson