

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

July 23, 2019

Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, US House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Speaker Pelosi,

I write today to express my grave concerns regarding H. Res. 496, a resolution “affirming that all Americans have the right to participate in boycotts in pursuit of civil and human rights at home and abroad, as protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution.”

H. Res. 496, introduced by Representatives Ilhan Omar (MN-05) and Rashida Tlaib (MI-13) on July 16, 2019, is a thinly veiled attack on the nation of Israel. In related interviews, Rep. Omar has expressly stated the intent of this legislation is to support the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement.

The growing support for BDS among our fellow congresswomen and men is indicative of wider intent to threaten and terrorize our Jewish brothers and sisters. The BDS movement does not simply call for the boycott, divestment, and sanctions of Israel; it is a much more sinister undertaking meant to attack and marginalize the Jewish people, cutting them off from western support and leaving them vulnerable in a region of political and religious instability. I fear that this insidious legislation is meant to brand the Jewish people as targets for those who wish to bring about the end of the nation of Israel.

Furthermore, as a member of the House Oversight Subcommittee on National Security, I believe the introduction of legislation like H. Res. 496 threatens American security interests. As a recognized nation, Israel was established after the Holocaust, in the wake of the most gruesome persecution and attempted genocide in history. Israel fights for peace and stability in a dangerous region. Israel is the United States’ strongest, and only true free, democratic Nation-State ally in the Middle East. Israel has supported American interests countless times through modern history. Any effort to destabilize or delegitimize Israel compromises American interests globally and constitutes a direct attack upon the United States.

Under our Constitution, everyone is entitled to express their own political beliefs. However, allowing clearly antisemitic legislation to be introduced and promoted without consequence in the U.S. Congress is a disgrace to our nation and one of its closest allies. It is your responsibility as the Speaker of the House and the leader of the Democratic Party to

publicly admonish this legislation. Madam Speaker, you characterized my sentiment on this issue best during your speech at AIPAC this past March:

“We must also be vigilant against bigoted or dangerous ideologies masquerading as policy, and that includes BDS.”

Therefore, I ask that you publicly condemn this legislation and stand with Israel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clay Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Clay Higgins
Member of Congress