

Testimony in Opposition to Ohio HCR 11
Ohio House Federalism Committee
Pamela H. Beck
October 23, 2019

Thank you, Representative Becker and distinguished members of the Federalism committee, for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to you today.

I am Pamela Beck of Shaker Heights. I am a member of the national steering committee of the United Church of Christ Palestine-Israel Network (UCC-PIN), and founder of UCC-PIN-Ohio. I am an active supporter of Jewish Voice for Peace. Both organizations work for equality, peace and freedom for Palestinians and Israelis. Both groups collaborate with other faith and human rights groups in the United States, Israel and around the world.

The United Church of Christ, headquartered in Cleveland and with almost a million members, voted support of Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (2015) and the international rights of Palestinian children (2017). Other denominations have passed similar resolutions or have similar advocacy groups - Presbyterian, United Methodist, American Baptist, Church of the Brethren, Quaker, Unitarian, Mennonite, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, etc.

I write in opposition to HCR 11. The information provided to you is inaccurate and deceptive.

Regarding the Resolution's inaccuracies, I attach here the detailed statement of John Quigley, submitted to the Federalism Committee on September 25, 2019. He details mis-statements and specifies strong warnings of the effect of any cavalier passing of HCR 11 out of committee. This Committee needs to wisely stop HCR 11.

Do not be cowed into submission by the proponents! It is NOT antisemitic to examine, question and criticize Israel's government and policies, just as it is not un-American to do so of our own government.

Please note that last week — October 16, 2019 — the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association announced its support for the Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act, HR 2407, in Congress. In endorsing this bill, the Reconstructionist Jews recognize that Israel abuses, illegally imprisons and kills Palestinian children, among numerous other violations of Palestinian (Christian and Muslim) human and civil rights.

The situation for Arab Christians and Arab Muslims in Israel and the Occupied Territories is desperate. The Resolution paints such a rosy picture of the sharing of Jerusalem by all its citizens, but it is false. Fifty (50) laws discriminate against Christian and Muslim citizens and residents of Israel and Jerusalem. The adoption of the Nation State statute is particularly egregious, defining Israel as a nation only for Jewish people — not Christians and not Muslims — and expressly eliminating Arabic as a native language.

The freedom and the livelihood of Palestinians – Muslims and Christians who live well together — is being destroyed. They would like to live with equality, justice and peace with their Jewish neighbors. The Christians see the time coming closer when there will be no Christians living in the land where Jesus was born, walked, preached, healed and died. American Christian Zionists, such as the “Christian United for Israel” proponents, ignore the Palestinian Christians. Instead, they support HCR11.

The final “Resolve” of the Resolution illuminates the intent of the proponents to lull the Ohio government and pressure Ohio universities into believing that only good emanates from Israel and prevent open discussion of the facts on the ground. This is to hide the facts from YOU and all Ohioans.

Again, this Committee needs to be wise and stop HCR 11.

Continue below to statement by John Quigley:

Statement of John Quigley
Federalism Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
October 23, 2019
H.C.R. No. 11

It is not within the legal power of Ohio to grant any territorial recognition to foreign entities. H.C.R. No. 11 is thus a nullity. The federal government has exclusive power to recognize foreign governments and to make judgments about their territory.

Successive federal administrations dating from 1967 have taken the position that the status of Jerusalem is undetermined and to be resolved by negotiation. Only the current federal administration has taken a dissenting view that may not last beyond 2021.

The status of Jerusalem is key to any overall resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The federal government has taken a stance against accepting an Israeli claim to Jerusalem because predetermining this issue renders an eventual negotiated settlement extremely difficult. The

consistent view of the entire international community is that the status of Jerusalem remains to be determined by negotiation.

On December 18, 2017, the member states of the UN Security Council felt so strongly against recognizing Israel's claim to Jerusalem that they drafted a resolution to condemn the move taken in that direction by the United States. The draft gained the votes of every member of the Security Council other than that of the United States.

To back Israel's claim is to contribute to anti-American sentiment throughout the Middle East. This is most dangerous at a time when US forces, including service personnel from Ohio, are at risk in Iraq and in Afghanistan. H.C.R. No. 11 puts Ohio service personnel at increased risk of anti-American violence like the so-called inside attacks that have occurred in Afghanistan.

To back Israel's claim is also to contribute to discrimination against Arab Christians and Arab Muslims who reside in Jerusalem. Under a statute adopted by Israel's parliament in 2018, Israel defines itself as a state of the Jewish people. That means that Arabs, even if they hold citizenship in Israel, are defined by law as being outside the circle of persons for whom the government exists.

The personal situation of non-citizen Arab Christians and Arab Muslims who reside in Jerusalem is particularly tenuous. They are deemed residents only, meaning if they absent themselves for a time they risk losing their residency status. If they marry a person from elsewhere, they may not be able to gain residency rights for their spouse.

The State of Ohio should not put its imprimatur on policies that discriminate on ethnic grounds and that render tenuous the hold of a population on territory it has inhabited since ancient times.

H.C.R. No. 11 is not well researched. A preamble clause states that Israel gained sovereignty over the entirety of Jerusalem on June 7, 1967. The sponsors should be asked for confirmation of this supposed fact. They will not be able to provide confirmation. Israel did not claim sovereignty when it took control of the eastern portion of the city in the 1967 war. Its foreign minister, Abba Eban, said in the United Nations in June 1967 that Israel was not claiming sovereignty.

Another preamble clause says that recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel would provide for efficacy of diplomacy. Again, the State of Ohio has no role in determining what is the capital of Jerusalem. So H.C.R. No. 11 will not have this effect. Moreover, most countries that recognize Israel conduct diplomacy from offices in Tel Aviv, where the Foreign Ministry maintains office. There has been no difficulty for foreign states in conducting diplomacy from offices in Tel Aviv.

Still another preamble clause states that each sovereign nation may designate its own capital. That is true only if it has sovereignty over the territory it deems to be its capital. Since sovereignty in Jerusalem is yet to be determined, Israel is not authorized to deem Jerusalem to

be its capital, and that is why most countries (including the United States with the exception of the current federal administration) do not accept Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem.

These various inaccuracies in H.C.R. No. 11 indicate that it is not a well thought-out piece of legislation. It should not be passed out of committee.