

Testimony in Opposition to Ohio HCR 10  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Government Accountability & Oversight  
November 1, 2017

I am Pamela Beck of Shaker Heights, representing UCC-PIN, the United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network. The United Church of Christ is headquartered in Cleveland and has more than a million members. The UCC has resolved to support Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (2015) and the international rights of Palestinian children (2017).

Boycotts, divestment and sanctions are **effective, nonviolent** tools:

- to remedy injustice, such as products produced under unfair conditions — in this case, products made by companies in illegal Israeli settlements on land confiscated from Palestinians. and
- to remove policies that produce unfair and unjust conditions, such as apartheid in South Africa. In this case, among other abuses, are the continual and increasing violation of Palestinians’ human rights by Israeli government policies; Israel’s use of \$3.1+ billion annual military aid from the United States; companies like Hewlett-Packard that profit from the control and repression of Palestinians; and the physical and psychological ill-treatment of Palestinian children – and adults - living under Israeli military occupation.

The BDS efforts address the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and its people; these efforts do not challenge Israel’s existence.

Israel and some other institutions are challenging **Americans’ human rights**. The Israeli government and American Zionists are spending millions of dollars, to de-legitimize the Constitutional Right specified by the First Amendment and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1982 (Claiborne Hardware vs. the Mississippi NAACP) — that **boycott is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment**. The Israeli government has hired a United States law firm to prepare law suits against BDS supporters in the U.S. and abroad.

HCR 10 a one-sided aim to chill freedom of speech on college campuses and in our communities, to suppress information, education, discussion, debate, articulation of opinions and ideas about the Palestine / Israel situation — just one topic.

In the United States, it takes work to find out what is happening to the Palestinian people. One of the proponents of this Resolution mentions the documentary “The Occupation of

the American Mind.” You should watch it and see how your perceptions have been developed through the spin and control of a public relations campaign. You are not told of Palestinian lives and families distressed, homes demolished, homes invaded at 2 AM by soldiers in full battle gear to ransack the home and take away a child — usually between the ages of 12 and 15, blind-folded, hands bound behind his/her back to a place unknown and inaccessible to the parents, without legal representation— restricted movement, restricted water, walled off so that most Israelis — and Americans — do not have any idea what the true conditions are.

The Europeans have better news coverage. European countries and the EU have provided assistance to the Palestinians — this year they provided solar panels so that Palestinian villages could have electricity BUT the Israeli forces came, disassembled them and took them away. Likewise, they destroyed newly built schoolrooms, leaving the children and teachers to teach and learn in a tent.

Just days ago, as the community was beginning the olive harvest, settlers from the illegal settlements on the hilltop flooded the olive tree fields with sewage.

The settlements are destroying the freedom and the livelihood of Palestinians – Muslims and Christians who live well together. They would like to live with equality, justice and peace with their Jewish neighbors. The Christians are seeing the day come closer when there will be no Christians living in the land where Jesus was born, walked, preached, healed and died.

This Resolution is an example of spin and propaganda – every aspect of information about the Palestine/Israel situation is labeled anti-semitic, threatening, intimidating, pernicious. etc. The facts on the ground in Palestine and Israel are what are really reprehensible — that’s why it is important to inform Americans through word and representation what our government is supporting.

There is another way — a just peace — with equal rights for all. Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups work together; they are a model to be held up to the forces of oppression. Unfortunately, the Israeli government works to suppress these groups.

This resolution should be tabled by this committee and left to die. You would be doing the proponents a favor (though they wouldn’t recognize it) to not take another step towards showing the power of a foreign country and its agents to suppress freedom of speech for Americans. Show your moral integrity and let it die.