

Testimony
OPPOSING House Concurrent Resolution 10
By Reem Subei
March 21, 2018

Chair Senator LaRose, Ranking Minority Member Senator Schiavoni and other members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee,

House Concurrent Resolution 10, claims to address anti-Semitism in Ohio

I am Reem Subei. I submit this testimony as a woman, an attorney, an activist, a university graduate, an American, an Arab, a Muslim, a minority, with the desire to freely express myself.

HCR 10 dispossesses me and others from free expression. But not everyone will be deprived of the right to freely express themselves if the Resolution passes – only those whose expression does not comport with what the Ohio General Assembly decided to be the right side.

In direct contravention of our US Constitution which protects the right of free speech for everyone, irrespective of what side they are on, Ohio legislators have decided to create a dichotomy of acceptable and unacceptable expression. What is that dichotomy, and what is it based on? It is based on the speaker's support of Israel.

House Resolution 10, in so many words, asks the speaker, "Will you express yourself in a manner that is critical of Israel?" If the answer is yes, then the Ohio General Assembly would exclude such speech from the realm of First Amendment protected speech.

The Resolution does that by mischaracterizing the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement as anti-Semitic. BDS, as is any boycott, a form of free expression. BDS is driven by the oppressive and unjust actions of the State of Israel.

Palestinians in the occupied territories are subjected to forcible relocation, demolition of their homes, theft of land, systematic infringement against civil, social, economic, and cultural rights, segregation, institutional discrimination, and other abuses documented by the United Nations. The situation is no better inside Israel, where Palestinian citizens are prohibited from living in more than 400 Jewish communities in Israel.

BDS campaigns support non-violently Palestinian freedom, human rights, and economic viability. Jews and non-Jews alike are active members of BDS because they know that the movement targets a state in a secular manner unrelated to race and national origin. The boycott ends when Israel ends its occupation, honors the Palestinian right of return, and ends its discrimination against Palestinian citizens.

I will end by quoting our Supreme Court in *NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co.*, 458 U.S. 886 (1982):

Each of these elements of the boycott is a form of speech or conduct that is ordinarily entitled to protection under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The black citizens . . . banded together and collectively expressed their dissatisfaction with a social structure that had denied them rights to equal treatment and respect.

Thank you for listening to my statement in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 10.