

Testimony in Opposition to Ohio H.C.R. 10

Title: “To Condemn Manifestations of Anti-Semitism”

Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee

By Reem Subei, JD (6/27/2018)

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

I am an attorney in Ohio, writing on behalf of a coalition of Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and non-practicing professionals who work together to protect the free speech rights of Ohioans. Our group is called the Free Speech Coalition of Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to HCR10. I previously submitted written testimony to your committee on 3/21/18. I previously also testified and submitted written testimony on House Bill 476, which is now law, in 2016. Both HB 476 and HCR progressed through the House and Senate despite their flagrant contravention of our First Amendment. Both have progressed irrespective of the Palestinians’ suffering. Every day Palestinian suffering multiplies, while American ignorance of it marches on.

As I write this testimony - burdened by the pain that I know my country is silently allowing the infliction of by Israel on Palestinian families and children – I cannot help but ask myself, what will it take to get the Ohio legislators to see Palestinians as humans? And whether I am able to fully inform you about the human atrocities committed against Palestinians by Israel on a daily basis or not, what will it take for you to agree that our First Amendment protects my right to disagree? HCR 10 will destroy Ohio students’ right to disagree.

HCR 10 starts out in its introductory paragraphs by listing Ohio’s relationship with the State of Israel. “WHEREAS, Ohio and Israel have a long history of friendship and are great allies in support of each other’s interests.” But as Americans, our allegiance and alliance need not extend to any state but our United States. Our rights cannot end when we dare to be critical of a foreign nation. In fact, our laws protect our right to denounce the wrongful acts of our very own country; how can we curtail the rights of our own citizens to condemn the human rights violations committed by Israel?

HCR 10 fails to implement its opening paragraph, “WHEREAS, The citizens of the State of Ohio have a history of standing against bigotry, oppression, discrimination, and injustice.” The resolution is a bold statement of oppression, discrimination, bigotry, and injustice against the Palestinian people, and against every American who dares to speak on their behalf.

Above, I reflected on HCR 10, as an American. I invite you to do the same. I implore you to vote down a resolution that is unconstitutional and un-American.

Thank you.