

HCS HB 2179 -- DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ISRAEL

SPONSOR: Rehder

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 8 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 4.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 2179.

This bill prevents any public entity from entering into a contract with a company that is boycotting Israel. The bill makes exceptions for contacts with a total potential value of less than \$100,000 and contractors with fewer than 10 employees. This section shall be known as the "Anti-Disrimination Against Israel Act".

This bill is similar to HB 1006 (2019).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that Missouri has a good relationship with Israel. Supporters testified that the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement is not designed to improve the life of Palestinians and creates a national security issue. They also stated that Israel is not a racist country and that there is a strategic alliance between Missouri and Israel. Proponents further testified that this bill only applies to companies and will not limit individual free speech.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rehder; Harvey M. Tettlebaum; Jim Conrady; Linda Conrady; Marcy Cornfeld; Nancy Lisker, American Jewish Committee Non Profit, Jewish Global Advocacy; and Richard Cornfeld.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill hinders their Constitutional right to boycott. The act of boycotting is a proud political position that promotes political and social change. Opponents stated that this bill will impact Missourians' right to free speech and that no boycott has been destructive to the United States. Opponents further testified that the BDS movement is about unity and equality, not about terrorism. Opponents stated that they are not anti-Semitic just because they support the BDS movement.

Testifying against the bill were American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri; George Smith; Layla Azmi Goushey; Linda Badran; Lynn Barkovitz Parshall; Michael Berg, Jewish Voice For Peace- St Louis; Michael Volz; Muath Salamen; Neveen Ayesh; Rabieh Ead; Raed Abuhanda; Ulaa Kuziez; Wesley Knight, Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ); Yael Shomroni; Fayek S. Subeh; George P. Smith; and Walid Ramadan.

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