

OPPOSE HB1394

Dear Chair Clippinger and the Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1394, which seeks to prohibit nonprofit organizations from supporting Israeli settlement activity. This bill is a misguided attempt to isolate Israel and undermine its legitimate efforts to protect its citizens and ensure the survival of the State of Israel.

As you are aware, Israel is a democratic nation with a right to self-defense and self-preservation. The bill's focus on Israeli settlement activity ignores the broader context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the numerous security threats faced by Israel. It is essential to recognize that Israel's actions are not driven by a desire to expand its territory, but rather to protect its citizens and maintain the integrity of its borders.

It is worth noting that other countries, including Russia, India, China, and Turkey, have pursued similar goals of protecting their citizens and maintaining national security without facing international condemnation. For example, India has maintained a robust military presence in Kashmir to protect its citizens from separatist groups, while China has taken steps to consolidate its control over the disputed territories of Tibet and Xinjiang. Turkey, meanwhile, has maintained a military presence in northern Cyprus to protect its interests and ensure the security of its citizens.

In contrast, Israel is subject to a unique and disproportionate level of scrutiny and criticism. The bill's focus on Israeli settlement activity is a prime example of this double standard. By singling out Israel for criticism, while ignoring similar actions by other nations, we risk creating a perception of bias and hypocrisy.

Furthermore, the bill's provisions, which would allow the Attorney General to bring an action against non-profit organizations that support Israeli settlement activity, raise serious concerns about the erosion of free speech and the chilling effect on charitable giving. This could lead to a chilling effect on the exercise of free speech and the ability of nonprofit organizations to engage in advocacy and education on issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In conclusion, I urge you to reject House Bill 1394 and instead focus on promoting a more balanced and nuanced approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By doing so, we can work towards a more just and peaceful resolution to this complex issue, rather than perpetuating a misguided and counterproductive approach that seeks to isolate and demonize Israel.

Sincerely,
Mark Meyerovich
Gaithersburg, MD