

NC GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSES BILL LIMITING CRITIQUE OF ISRAEL

Below is the press release crafted by Jewish Voice for Peace – Triangle NC and co-sponsored by a host of interfaith and human rights allies and friends opposing the passage of HB 161 - a bill that would divest the State's pension plan from any company engaging in human rights boycotts of Israel. HB 161 intersects with other discriminatory and harmful legislation that impacts large swaths of our NC population.

Having passed both Houses, HB 161 is on its way to the Governor and we are urging his VETO. Some of you have already written to him on his website: governor.nc.gov/contact-governor-cooper. **Calls to (919) 814-2000** will also help raise the temperature. We hope the press release is helpful to share with your networks and congregants to encourage them to contact the Governor. Please share.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Interfaith and Free Speech Groups Urge Governor to Veto Anti-Protest HB 161

RALEIGH, NC – On June 28th, lawmakers in the North Carolina General Assembly passed a [bill](#) that would divest the state's pension plan from any company engaging in human rights boycotts of Israel. The Senate voted yesterday to approve House Bill 161, "*Divestment from Companies that Boycott Israel*," a different version of which passed the House on March 22, 2017.

A broad coalition of social justice and faith institutions are demanding that Governor Roy Cooper not sign HB 161. 20 organizations signed a [petition](#) calling the bill a "repressive tactic of silencing free speech and prohibiting protest." These include Quaker House of Fayetteville NC, Muslim American Public Affairs Council, NC Council of Churches, NC Public Workers Union - UE Local 150, and Jewish Voice for Peace–Triangle NC.

The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories has been deemed illegal under international law, and the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement (BDS) seeks to end discriminatory treatment of Palestinians. Faith organizations including Presbyterian Church-USA and United Church of Christ have chosen to divest due to the Israeli occupation, and Human Rights Watch and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia have called for boycotts to pressure Israel to end its occupation.

A case study by the [Harvard Law Review](#) on similar South Carolina anti-boycott legislation concluded, "*the anti-BDS statute passed by South Carolina and those being considered by several other states are likely unconstitutional in nearly all of their applications... Supreme Court precedents make clear that attempts to disqualify contractors for support of BDS are foreclosed by the First Amendment.*"

"Some legislators may be genuinely interested in challenging antisemitism," said Beth Bruch. "Antisemitism needs to be challenged in the context of racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, not by attacking a human rights movement in which many Jews participate."

"This bill is part of a larger pattern of criminalizing People of Color-led justice movements," said Gabriel Baldasare. "I'm disappointed lawmakers failed to recognize the same perfidious hands at play in this 'economic warfare' bill as in the 'economic terrorism' bill that died in the House this spring."

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Jewish Voice for Peace-Triangle NC is the local chapter of the national, grassroots organization (jvp.org) inspired by Jewish tradition to work for a just and lasting peace according to principles of human rights, equality, and international law for all the people of Israel and Palestine. JVP has over 200,000 online supporters, over 60 chapters, a youth wing, a Rabbinic Council, an Artist Council, an Academic Advisory Council, and an Advisory Board made up of leading U.S. intellectuals and artists.