

Criticizing Israel Unrelated to Anti-Semitism

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Calling criticism of Zionism and Israel anti-Semitic turns truth on its head. One has nothing to do with the other.

Anti-Semitism reflects hostility or discrimination against Judaism as a religion. Israel is a nation-state. Criticizing its ruthlessness is essential to challenge what's clearly intolerable. Equating it to anti-Semitism is a bald-faced lie.

On Wednesday, proposed House legislation disgracefully conflating the two was introduced in deference to Israel and its US lobby – called the Anti-Semitism Act of 2018.

It cites Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

It says nothing about religion, but that's not the point. What is relevant is that criticizing Israeli policies has nothing to do with discrimination of any kind.

It's about supporting right over wrong, about challenging nation-state ruthlessness, unacceptable apartheid contempt for Palestinian rights, holding an entire population hostage under occupation harshness, blockaded Gazans harmed most.

Trump appointed Zionist zealot Kenneth Marcus to head the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights. He's awaiting Senate confirmation.

As founder and head of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, a Washington-based NGO, he supports Israeli policies no matter how lawless and egregious.

The group shamefully calls anti-Semitism and "anti-Israelism" on university campuses the "leading civil and human rights challenge facing North American Jewry." What rubbish!

It's silent about longstanding Israeli high crimes of war and against humanity, its ruthless persecution of illegally occupied Palestinians, and its own Arab citizens.

It supports Israeli policies at the expense of equity and justice. Marcus is well-known for "excessive litigation against Palestine solidarity activists," Mondoweiss earlier explained.

He's militantly against BDS activism, the most effective initiative to hold Israel accountable for its high crimes.

He uses Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a weapon against Israeli criticism, activism for Palestinian rights, and academic freedom.

He aims to use the Anti-Semitism Act of 2018, if enacted into law, to bully and censor Israeli critics, the legislation empowering the office he holds to enforce a law dismissive of persecuted and discriminated against Muslims and Sikhs.

The measure's purpose is to intimidate, inhibit, and censor Israeli critics, especially on college campuses where activists urge adoption of student council resolutions to boycott Israel for its high crimes.

It's unconstitutional, a flagrant First Amendment violation, guaranteeing free expression in all forms – no matter how offensive or at odds with the official narrative.

The proposed measure supports Israel uncritically, ignoring its high crimes of war, against humanity, and slow-motion genocide.

No other nation, political entity, or group of any kind is afforded protection from criticism under US law.

Free expression is inviolable, numerous Supreme Court rulings affirming it. The Arab American Institute said the following:

"The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act masquerades as addressing anti-Semitism while shielding Israel from criticism."

"If passed, the bill would unconstitutionally proscribe legitimate political expression with respect to criticism of foreign governments and does nothing to combat hate in our classrooms" or anywhere else.

ACLU executive director Anthony Romero slammed the proposed measure, saying it "risks chilling the free speech of students on college campuses, and is unnecessary to enforce federal law's prohibition on harassment in education," adding:

It'll "lead colleges to suppress speech, especially if the Department of Education launches investigations simply because students have engaged in speech critical of Israel."

It's similar to bills wanting BDS activism outlawed, congressional legislation failing to pass so far.

JewishVoiceForPeace rabbi Joseph Berman tweeted:

"JVP calls on Congress to oppose the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act."

"It's not an 'anti-Semitism awareness act' – it's the Silencing Students Act."

It's a shot across the bow to silence all justifiable criticism of Israel. Perhaps criminalizing it comes next.

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