

Peace Coalition of Monterey County

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Working together to create a more just and peaceful world

www.peacemonterey.org - 1364 Fremont Boulevard – Seaside, CA 93955

1 October 2016

Senator Bill Monning
701 Ocean St #318a, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Senator Monning,

On behalf of the Peace Coalition of Monterey County, thank you for your courageous vote against AB 2844, standing up for the rights of individuals and groups to boycott and protect the First Amendment freedom of speech rights.

The authors of AB 2844 have portrayed the bill as an anti-discrimination measure, requiring certain state contractors to certify, under penalty of perjury, that any policy against a “sovereign nation or peoples” is not a pretext for “discrimination.” As noted by the ACLU California in a letter to Assembly Member Richard Bloom, who introduced AB 2844, it “evidently seeks to burden and deter constitutionally-protected speech by targeting those who criticize or protest actions by the Israeli government.” In fact, only Israel is singled out for special mention in the bill text.

We agree with Estee Chandler, founder of the Los Angeles chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace, who stated, “California legislators and Governor Brown should not be joining the list of elected officials willing to trade away the First Amendment rights of Americans to protect Israel’s discriminatory policies and human rights abuses from public scrutiny.”

If signed into law by Governor Brown, state and state-affiliated institutions will be prohibited from engaging in contracts with businesses boycotting Israel; also, if the bill becomes law, the state government can impose huge fines/penalties on those businesses that are found to be violating the provisions of the legislation. This would essentially blacklist businesses supporting BDS from state and state municipality contracts. As you noted, political speech is protected by the First Amendment, and according to the Supreme Court, politically motivated boycotts are also protected.

Thank you for speaking up in defense of the right to boycott, a nonviolent act—an act of moral concern. We appreciate your voting your conscience.

Respectfully,

Thomas F. Lee, Chair Peace Coalition of Monterey County
Please reply to tlee7621gptc@gmail.com or 831 394 6470



**Humanist Association of the Monterey Bay Area - Libertarians for Peace – Monterey Peninsula Friends Meeting-Monterey
Peace & Justice Center - Occupy Monterey Peninsula - United Nations Association/USA, Monterey Bay Chapter -
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Monterey Branch**