

# Congress Passes “Landmark” Anti-BDS Amendment Opposed by J Street and Peace Now



What some consider as a “landmark” anti-BDS Amendment to the Fast Track Trade Promotion Authority legislation passed the Senate on Wednesday afternoon, June 24, 2015. Having passed both the House and Senate the legislation now goes to President Obama for his signature. That’s good news for Israel, bad news for J Street and Peace Now who opposed the anti-BDS Amendment. Clearly, the President’s overriding objective was completion of negotiations of a [Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement](#) which gives the US leverage in competition with China and encourages job creation and business in the US. J Street and Peace Now have been allies of the Administration promoting a Palestinian State that would divide Israel’s capital of Jerusalem. Those groups also support the looming P5+1 Iran nuclear agreement with a current deadline of next Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Among the principal sponsors of the anti-BDS Amendment were : Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) and members of the House bi-partisan [Congressional Israel Allies Caucus](#) , Representative Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Representative Juan Vargas (D-CA). The anti-BDS measure passed by Congress has garnered praise from mainstream American and international Jewish Groups: AIPAC, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress.

As noted in a *Times of Israel* [report](#):

The anti-BDS provisions in the trade authorization were directed toward free trade talks between the US and the European Union. The provisions require US negotiators to

make rejection of BDS a principal trade objective in [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) negotiations with the European Union. These guidelines, sponsors hope, will discourage European governments from participating in BDS activities by leveraging the incentive of free trade with the US.

Rep. Roskam issued a statement saying:

Today, for the first time in nearly four decades, Congress sent legislation to the President's desk to combat efforts to isolate and delegitimize the State of Israel. The recent wave of boycotts originating in Europe, including French telecom company Orange's decision last week to sever ties with Israel, demands a robust response from the United States. This is that response. The bipartisan TPA provisions I authored are simple: if you want free trade with the United States, you can't boycott Israel.

After today, discouraging economic warfare against Israel will be central to our free trade negotiations with the European Union. Congress will not be complicit in the marginalization of our ally Israel by watching these attacks from the sidelines. Instead, we have decided to fight back against the BDS movement and ensure the continued strength of the US-Israel relationship.

President Ronald Lauder of the WJC added:

The Senate today took a strong stand against the growing vilification of Israel. American values such as freedom and openness have triumphed over the blatant hypocrisy and bias of the anti-Israel campaigners. This vote marks a major defeat for BDS.

J Street and Peace Now opposed the anti-BDS legislation on the grounds that "the amendment plays into the hands of BDS activists' claims by conflating boycott of Israel and boycott of products of settlements."

The author of the *Algemeiner* article on why J Street and other groups opposed the anti-BDS amendment [commented](#):

The impression one gets is that J-Street wants to maintain its ties to radical anti-Israel BDS groups like Jewish Voice for Peace but still wants to pretend to be pro-Israel.

Pro-Israel? Yeah, right.

The passage of the anti-BDS amendment should encourage the [Israel Allies Foundation](#) Jerusalem Call that worked with South Carolina State Rep. Alan Clemmons developing a state level [model anti-BDS statue](#) signed into law on June 4, 2015 by Governor Nikki Haley. In our 1330am WEBY interview with [Dr. Daniel Williams](#), National Director of the IAF Jerusalem Call he noted that the South Carolina model is being filed in 17 states, among them Ohio and potentially here in Florida. J Street is the subject of a viewing of the Americans for Peace and Tolerance documentary, [J Street Challenge](#), Saturday evening, June 27, 2015 at Brit Ahm Synagogue in Pensacola. A panel discussion will follow that includes Florida State Rep. Mike Hill, Mike Bates of WEBY's "Your Turn", Rabbi Eric Tokajer of Brit Ahm and this writer. On Tuesday evening June 30, 2015, Rep. Hill and Guy Rodgers, Director of Operations for the [IAF Jerusalem Call](#) will be the principal speakers about support for Israel and the work of the group at Pensacola First Assembly of God Church.