



Don't Legitimize Israeli Settlements: Reject S. 720

While billed as the “Israel Anti-Boycott Act,” S. 720 would be more appropriately titled “The Anti-Settlement Boycott Act,” because it attempts to shelter Israeli settlements from international accountability measures as well as domestic political criticism. This bill would have troubling results:

1) Legitimizing settlements in U.S. policy

This bill legitimizes illegal Israeli settlements by treating settlements as part of Israel, effectively [erasing the Green Line in U.S. law](#). Settlements are Jewish-only residential areas built on Palestinian land in the West Bank, across the Green Line and under Israeli military occupation.

- [Settlements obstruct prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace](#), because building settlements requires the destruction of Palestinian land. Palestinians living near settlements also face threats to their livelihoods and safety including attacks by settlers, violence from soldiers, and restrictions on access to their farmlands, schools, and homes.
- [Treating settlements as part of Israel proper reverses decades of official U.S. policy](#), which has opposed the settlements as a roadblock to peace for nearly a half century.

2) Suppressing political criticism of Israeli settlements

This legislation would impose penalties against people, businesses, and international governmental bodies that challenge illegal Israeli settlement policies, by conflating the settlement boycott with the movement for boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) and by instituting new penalties for those who boycott settlement goods.

- [This bill stigmatizes the boycott of settlements](#), which international observers have chosen to boycott because they are [illegal under international law](#). The bill opposes the UN Human Rights Council effort to establish a database of businesses in illegal Israeli settlements, calling it “[reminiscent of the Arab League Boycott](#)” of Israel as a whole.
- [This bill renders it illegal for U.S. companies to choose to boycott Israeli settlements based on calls by human rights bodies](#) of the United Nations or the European Union.

“There is almost zero pretense that the effort is about anything other than legitimizing settlements and Israeli settlement policy in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem.”

– Lara Friedman, [Americans for Peace Now](#)