

February 15, 2022

Dear Mr.

Thank you for contacting me to express your thoughts on the extremely important issue of supporting peace and human rights in the Middle East and the role that the Israeli Relations Normalization Act might take in this effort. I appreciate you taking the time to share your views and take part in the legislative process.

During my first term, I took great effort to engage our district deeply on this issue and spoke to a variety of constituents, experts, and organizations who hold differing opinions. It was also important to me and many of my constituents for me to travel to Israel and Palestine in order to learn about the situation first hand and formulate an opinion on how we truly pave a path to ensure human rights and healing.

On this visit, I continued to dig deep and engage people directly on the ground, including high level Palestinian and Israeli government officials. While I originally co-sponsored the Israel Relations Normalization Act seeing it as an opportunity to make progress toward justice and healing in the Middle East as well as a path to a two state solution, my experience on the ground and further conversation with constituents led me to see that it is not the right step to fulfill these goals. Furthermore, I became aware that the deals that this bill supports and seeks to pursue, have included deals at odds with human rights and safety for everyday people in the region, including the recognition of Morocco's control over Western Sahara, and conversations about arms sales with the United Arab Emirates. In the end, it is my estimation that these actions will only escalate violence in the Middle East and make already vulnerable communities less safe. This agreement to normalize relations unhelpfully isolates Palestine and Western Sahara when what we need is a process that engages them. I am writing to notify you that I will be withdrawing my co-sponsorship of this legislation, and should it come to the House Floor for a vote, I will vote "No."

I am grateful for the countless thoughtful and educational conversations I have had with faith leaders, constituents, organizational leaders, foreign policy experts and more here in New York's 16th Congressional District and beyond. These conversations are invaluable to our shared goal of building bridges and making progress on issues that matter most to our community, country, and the world. I remain as committed as ever to ensuring that your thoughts and suggestions guide me in my efforts to advance our shared values and legislative agenda in Washington.

I encourage you to keep in touch. If there is anything I can do to assist you, please do not hesitate to let me know. Additionally, please visit my website at <https://bowman.house.gov/> to sign-up for my e-newsletter, or follow me on Twitter @RepBowman, to stay up to date on issues impacting our community.

Sincerely,

Jamaal Bowman
Member of Congress

JEWISH INSIDER