

Your First Amendment Rights
Fact Sheet

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| <i>Background</i> | <p>⇒ 2017—MN Legislature passes MN Stat. 3.226 and 16C.038: preventing the State from contracting with those who boycott Israel.</p> <p>MN is one of over 30 states to pass such laws We believe the laws are unconstitutional. Boycotts are political speech that have been upheld by the US Supreme Court. Boycotts have a long history in the US political movements, <i>e.g.</i> The Boston Tea Party, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Cesar Chavez Grape Boycott, etc.</p> <p>⇒ Lawsuits filed against states with similar laws as Minnesota's: Arizona, Kansas, Texas, Georgia and Arkansas. First Amendment won in eight hearings. When a case was re-heard by the <i>en banc</i> US Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, they ruled against the plaintiff (saying the boycott of Israel is discrimination and not protected by the First Amendment.) Case will be appealed to the US Supreme Court.</p> <p>⇒ Theory put forward that the wording of the laws against boycotts of Israel would be used to prevent boycotts of many other things, <i>e.g.</i> fossil fuels, weapons manufacturers, factory farms....</p> <p>⇒ This is no longer theory! Oklahoma, Texas, North Dakota, and Missouri all have laws which prohibit boycotts of weapons manufacturers and fossil fuel industries.</p> <p>⇒ Republicans in the Minnesota legislature introduced SF 4441 and HF 4574 to prohibit boycotts of mining, agricultural, fossil fuels and lumber industries. This has not passed – YET.</p> <p>⇒ The movie <i>Boycott</i> (trailer here: https://vimeo.com/618212678) shows how this restriction on free speech rights begins as a restriction on boycotting Israel and moves to many other issues.</p> |
| <i>What we are doing</i> | <p>⇒ Since before the 2017 laws were passed in Minnesota, a coalition of organizations attempted to stop them, and then to repeal them.</p> <p>⇒ We are asking Attorney General Keith Ellison for two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Issue an advisory opinion on the constitutionality of the existing Minnesota laws and the bills penalizing those who boycott. This will help in our efforts to get the laws repealed and to prevent the bills from becoming law.2. Write an <i>amicus</i> brief to the US Supreme Court to strike down Arkansas' anti-boycott law (which is similar to Minnesota's). |

*Partial List of
Organizations that
are taking part in
this effort*

MN BDS Community (BDS: Boycott Divestment and Sanctions)
Women Against Military Madness (WAMM)
MN Break the Bonds Campaign (MN BBC)
The Anti-War Coalition (AWC)
Friends of Sabeel North America – MN (FOSNA)
National Lawyers Guild (NLG)
Reviving Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)
Climate Justice Committee (CJC)
Northfielders for Justice in Palestine/Israel (NJP/I)
Coulee Region Coalition for Palestinian Rights
Jewish Voice for Peace—Twin Cities (JVP-TC)
Middle East Peace Now (MEPN)
Divestment Coalition
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Honor the Earth
Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE)
Minneapolis Federation of Teachers
MN 350
Twin Ports Peace Not Walls
Students for Palestinian Liberation (Winona State University)
Veterans for Peace

*Want more
information?*

Contact us at mn@breakthebonds.org