

COUNTER ARGUMENTS TO DEFEND OUR PETITION

1) NEA has already made statements and we've been assured that leaders are working "behind the scenes." Why do you keep pushing for more?

Words alone won't get Israel to stop its ethnic cleansing campaign. Words alone won't get President Biden to stop supporting Israel's war crimes. And words alone won't get NEA leadership to revoke its endorsement of the President. It will only happen if YOU take action. And working "behind the scenes" is fine as a tactic, but why limit ourselves to that tactic, particularly when we can plainly see that it isn't leading to the changes we demand?

2) But won't we lose members if word gets out to them that we're taking a stand on this controversial issue? Won't this weaken our union?

That is always a risk when we take a stand, that members who disagree will end their membership. Every time our union is asked to be bold and stand for justice, this concern about losing members is raised. If you let this rationale guide us, NEA would never have taken a stand in support of our LGBTQIA siblings, in support of women, or in support of Black Lives Matter. But we did, and we are stronger, not weaker, for having done so!

3) Isn't this out of our lane? Shouldn't we stick to concerns directly related to our schools and students here in the US?

The concept of solidarity requires us to take action regardless of what side of a border the injustice is occurring. Schools being bombed should be our business no matter where in the world it is happening. Children being killed by the thousands should be our concern no matter if they're American, Israeli or Palestinian. Our tax dollars are being used to enable war crimes. That makes it our business. Our pension funds most likely include investments in companies directly involved in those war crimes. That too makes it our duty to take action.

4) Isn't this issue too complex for us as outsiders to weigh in?

Speaking out against colonialism, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing should never be silenced out of fear that the issues are "too complicated." The genocide of Native Americans was complicated. Slavery and racism is complicated. So what? It's our duty as a union priding itself on social justice to speak out.

Also, as residents in the US, we aren't neutral or outsiders anyway. Our government is complicit. Our taxes pay for bombs dropped on Palestinian families. The US uses Israel to exert its power in the region. It absolutely is our duty as US residents to speak out

Malcolm X simplified the situation when he compared it to what it would be like if African Americans moved to Africa, back to where their ancestors were from, pushed out the current residents, stole their land, and set up an Afro American nation that severely limited the rights of the displaced.

5) Doesn't Israel have a right to defend itself?

People have a right to defend themselves. Those rights do not include ethnic cleansing. They do not include killing over 25,000 civilians. They do not include bombing schools. The best defense of the Israeli people would be for Israel to end the policies it uses to create inhumane and undemocratic living conditions for the Palestinian people.

6) Isn't this antisemitic? Doesn't this open the door for accusations and attacks?

Haters are gonna hate and anti union organizations will always find excuses to attack us. We cannot let that paralyze us. We also cannot let them cheapen the term antisemitism. Killing Palestinians and stealing their land violates the core beliefs of Judaism. This is why so many Jews are outraged. In fact, equating being Jewish with being Israeli is antisemitic. The belief that all real Jews belong in their own separate Jewish Zionist ethno-state and cannot live safely in the diaspora is antisemitic. Taking a stand against genocide is taking a stand with thousands of Jews all over the world who are protesting Israel's actions. It's taking a stand against a rightwing Israeli prime minister and his rightwing, Trump-like administration.

7) Won't this make it easier for Trump to get re-elected if we revoke Biden's endorsement?

Actually, getting President Biden to change his position on Israel will help him to beat Trump. People who vote Democratic are overwhelmingly in support of a permanent ceasefire and disapprove of Biden's handling of the situation. Particularly the younger demographic that pushed Biden across the finish line in the last election are ready to sit this one out or vote 3rd party if he doesn't change course. If our pressure succeeds, it will help, not hinder, Biden's chances of defeating Trump. And shouldn't we be willing to fight for our core values regardless of which party the President belongs to?