

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal Was Correct

LA Jews for Peace agrees with Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal that “Israel is a racist state.”

Israeli government racial discrimination against its Palestinian citizens is an established characteristic of Israeli law. Three examples:

- The 2018 Nation State Basic Law says national rights in Israel belong only to the Jewish people. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said¹, “Israel is not a state of all its citizens.”
- The 2022 Family Unification Law that bars Palestinian citizens of Israel from bringing their West Bank Palestinian spouses into Israel, whereas Jewish citizens can bring their foreign spouses into Israel.
- The 1950 Absentee Property Law which Israel used to confiscate almost all Palestinian property throughout the country.
- Israeli and international Human Rights groups including B’Tselem, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, find that Israel is an apartheid state, especially in the West Bank and Gaza, where 5 million Palestinians are held without rights, have their property destroyed and confiscated with no compensation, and have no vote for the government that controls their lives.

As is typically the case when a Democratic Congressperson criticizes Israel, there was harsh condemnation of Payapal’s comment from her Democratic colleagues who called her comments anti-Semitic. But they were not anti-Semitic because they expressed no hatred for Jews. Rather, as outlined above, they criticized Israel government laws and policies that arguably violate the 1949 Geneva Convention and the 1945 UN Charter on Human Rights.

Israel lobby devotee Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz said Jayapal’s statement was “hurtful and harmful, it was wholly inaccurate ...”² But as shown above Jayapal’s statement was true and only hurtful to Schultz because her “love” of Israel blinds her to many obvious facts of anti-Palestinian discrimination.

Part of the criticism of Jayapal is that her comments undermine the decades-long consensus on Israel, the very consensus that NY Times columnist Ton Friedman³ says must be reassessed because actions of Israel’s present extreme right-wing government are destroying the shared US-Israel values that the consensus relies on.

LA Jews for Peace commends Congresswoman Jayapal for expressing the truth that “Israel is a racist state,” knowing that it would trigger a harsh backlash. Her courage in advocating for your beliefs is admirable.

¹ The Guardian, March 10, 2019. [zhttps://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/10/benjamin-netanyahu-says-israel-is-not-a-state-of-all-its-citizens](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/10/benjamin-netanyahu-says-israel-is-not-a-state-of-all-its-citizens)

² CNN, July 16, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/16/politics/pramila-jayapal-israel-netroots-nation/index.html>

³ NY Times, July 11, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/11/opinion/netanyahu-israel-judiciary.html>