

Dear Durham City Council Members,

We are active Rabbis in the greater Triangle (most in Durham).

Our purpose in writing has its origin in the reports that a small organization, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), has submitted or plans to submit, a petition that is intended to influence city ordinances concerning Durham and Israel. This petition “demands” that the City boycott any future exchange programs associated with Israel and Durham police. The petition is biased and bad policy for Durham and its police department. The rationale for the “demand” surrounds false and inflammatory claims that Israel international expertise in counter-terrorism is directly linked to bias and racism in the Durham police department. To link Israel to White Supremacy and other forms of hate speech in the U.S, to insinuate that Israel teaches American police to attack minorities in our country, or that problems in U.S. policing are due to the Israel/Palestinian conflict are insulting and will only serve to demonize Israel and the Jewish people. Efforts to delegitimize Israel are a purposeful strategy by some organizations, part of a broader strategy to promote Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel, and one that is purposefully targeting Durham to accept terrible lies. No evidence exists that sharing best practices on counter-terrorism in society cannot be beneficial to those that listen, reflect and make decisions for their own communities. The events that unfolded in Austin Texas, Parkland, Florida, and many more communities are great reminders that domestic terrorism does exist in the U.S. and can affect anyone and any community.

As Rabbis who serve the majority of Jewish families across the region, and who strive for social justice each and every day, we pray that you will take the time for due diligence before acting. We believe that once you examine the matter carefully, including listening to experts in security, you will reject the petition and instead, embrace the myriad of proven activities that can be done in the City that promote less bias at home without singling out one of the World’s strongest democracies for unfair and false charges.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Larry Bach
Judea Reform Congregation

Rabbi Zalman Bluming
Chabad of Durham and Chapel Hill

Rabbi Lucy Dinner
Temple Beth Or

Rabbi Jen Feldman
Kehillah Synagogue

Rabbi Jerry Fox
Beth El Synagogue

Rabbi Daniel Greyber
Beth El Synagogue

Rabbi Steven Sager
Beth El Synagogue

Rabbi Eric Solomon
Beth Meyer Synagogue

Adding my Voice to the Many Other Concerned Jewish Leaders in the Triangle

Dear Esteemed Council Members,

As a Rabbi in the greater Triangle, (Cary, NC) allow me to briefly address a concern of mine that I only recently heard about due to our involvement in the Passover Holiday which just concluded this past weekend.

A very small organization, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), has submitted “demands” that the City of Durham boycott any future exchange programs associated with Israel and Durham police. The argument is biased and bad policy for Durham and its police department. The rationale for the “demand” surrounds false and inflammatory claims that Israel international expertise in counter-terrorism is directly linked to bias and racism in the Durham police department. To link Israel to White Supremacy and other forms of hate speech in the U.S, to insinuate that Israel teaches American police to attack minorities in our country, or that problems in U.S. policing are due to the Israel/Palestinian conflict are insulting and will only serve to demonize Israel and the Jewish people.

I firmly believe that once you examine the matter carefully, including listening to experts in security, you will reject the petition and instead, embrace the myriad of proven activities that can be done in the City that promote less bias at home without singling out one of the World’s strongest democracies for unfair and false charges.

Thank you for your consideration
Rabbi Yisroel Cotlar

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Rabbi Yisroel Cotlar
Chabad of Cary

Please Oppose Petition to Boycott Israel

Dear Members of the Durham City Council,

As the rabbi of a local Triangle synagogue that includes families residing in Durham, I write in full agreement with other area rabbis to urge you to oppose the petition to boycott a partnership between the Durham Police and the Israel Defense Forces. The Jewish Voice for Peace petition is unfair, inequitable, and unjust in its treatment of Israel. In my view, the petition is not at all reflective of the sentiment of the local Jewish and Christian communities here in our area. I am concerned that the petition will fuel anti-Semitism locally and beyond. I believe that Israel has proven itself in being able to offer valuable security training that local police could apply to the Durham community in a way that respects and embraces the beautiful diversity that we cherish in the Triangle. Opposing the petition will be good for Durham and for the entire Triangle.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Seth N. Klayman, Ph.D.
Congregation Sha'arei Shalom
Cary, North Carolina