

# Kansas Sued over Law that Punishes Those Who Boycott Israel

written by GEG | October 17, 2017



The ACLU is suing the state of Kansas because it has a law that punishes those who boycott Israel, a law that limits free speech and compels political speech. Esther Koontz is a member of the Mennonite Church USA, which divested from Israeli companies this year. She is a schoolteacher who has been banned from employment by the Kansas Department of Education for refusing to sign the following statement: "As an Individual or Contractor entering into a contract with the State of Kansas, it is hereby certified that the Individual or Company listed below is not currently engaged in a boycott of Israel." -GEG

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit against the state of Kansas for a law that punishes people who boycott Israel, the organization announced last week.

The lawsuit is based on a complaint by Kansas public school math teacher Esther Koontz, who is a member of the Mennonite Church USA, which divested from Israeli companies this year and urged members to do the same. But in July, a Kansas law went into effect that requires any person or company that contracts with the state to sign a statement that says there are "not currently engaged in a boycott of Israel."

Koontz said the law punishes her for her political beliefs and prevents her from working

as a public school teacher and math teacher trainer.

“As a member of the Mennonite Church USA, and a person concerned with the human rights of all people – and specifically the ongoing violations of Palestinians’ human rights in Israel and Palestine – I choose to boycott consumer goods made by Israeli and international companies that profit from the violation of Palestinians’ rights,” Koontz said.

However, the Kansas State Department of Education informed her that she would have to sign the following statement in order to contract with the state: “As an Individual or Contractor entering into a contract with the State of Kansas, it is hereby certified that the Individual or Company listed below is not currently engaged in a boycott of Israel.”

Koontz wouldn’t sign the statement and was subsequently banned from teacher training.

“I was stunned,” Koontz said. “It seems preposterous that my decision to participate in a political boycott should have any effect on my ability to work for the state of Kansas.”

[Read full article here...](#)