

# Defend democratic rights! Support the anti-genocide resolution at Austin Community College!

Austin Community College IYSSE  
23 April 2024

The Austin Community College International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) club urges students to support the resolution being put before the Student Government Association defending groups and individuals opposed to the genocide in Gaza.

Students should attend the SGA meeting to voice their support on April 29 at 3pm in the SGA room on the second story of building 1000 at Highland Campus. Discuss and distribute the resolution with your friends and classmates!

*The text of the resolution can be found here.*

As of this writing, over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel, most of them women and children. The majority of the 2 million people living in Gaza are cornered in Rafah, which is bombed on a daily basis. A third of Gazans are suffering famine, with this number expected to increase to one half (1.1 million people) by mid-July.

This genocide is backed by the US and its NATO allies. While supporting genocide in Gaza, they are waging a war on the democratic rights at home.

In Germany, 900 police recently stormed the Palestine Congress in Berlin, arresting dozens and imposing a ban on prominent academics and politicians.

In the US, the Democratic Party and fascist Republicans are carrying out a witch hunt against protesters and students, smearing opponents of genocide and war as “anti-Semites.”

At Columbia University in New York, the New York police (NYPD) was called in by the university administration to mass arrest over 108 Columbia and Barnard student protesters. At NYU, dozens of students and faculty have been brutalized by NYPD riot cops.

Fascist Republicans Josh Hawley and Tom Cotton have called on Biden to mobilize the National Guard against student protesters, raising the specter of the Kent State massacre in 1970.

Clubs opposing the genocide, such as Jewish Voice for Peace and Students for Justice in Palestine, have been suspended on campuses run by the Democrats, including Columbia University, Rutgers, and the University of Pennsylvania. In California, University of Southern California valedictorian Asna Tabassum has been barred from giving her commencement address due to her pro-Palestinian views.

At the University of Texas at Austin, which has close ties to ACC, four students were punished in February with deferred suspensions for a peaceful protest.

In Texas, Students for Justice in Palestine and the Palestinian Solidarity Committee are being directly attacked by the far-right governor, Greg Abbott. In his executive order, GA 44, Abbott called for them to be “disciplined” for opposing the genocide. He has ordered free speech policies to be revised on Texas campuses to establish punishments, including expulsion, for “antisemitic speech.” The logic of the executive order is to eliminate free speech on campuses altogether.

The IYSSE unequivocally opposes the attacks on freedom of speech against students, academics, artists and workers, and we call for students, workers and youth to mobilize against this state campaign.

In open defiance of the state attack, student protests at universities across the city and the country have grown. But the ruling class will not simply back down and yield to pressure. A counteroffensive by students, youth and workers is necessary to defend democratic rights.

This resolution is aimed at developing this counteroffensive at ACC. In the very first point, it affirms the “right to freedom of speech and academic freedom.” It opposes the witchhunt and Abbott’s executive order. It calls for the rescinding of all suspensions, evictions and legal charges against victimized students at Columbia and at all other colleges and universities. It condemns the blackguarding of student clubs opposed to the genocide, such as the SJP, PSC, and JVP.

The arguments put forward by the administration and its supporters against a previous similar resolution in the ACC SGA on February 2 are illustrative for what is in store if there is no counteroffensive against this anti-democratic campaign.

One such argument attempted to use the anti-democratic Texas anti-BDS law, which prevents state-funded organizations from calling for BDS (boycotts, divestment, and sanctions) against Israel. The logical conclusion is that the bounds of “acceptable” freedom of speech are set by the government, i.e., free speech as a right does not exist anymore.

Another more explicit version was made by an administration official, who told SGA members that it could not consider a resolution and that it was “illegal” for it to take any political stance. That is, whatever is designated as “political,” is verboten. This is an argument for a ban on political speech and activity by an elected student government!

Youth and workers must be warned: The anti-democratic methods being established today, under the false and slanderous claims of fighting “anti-Semitism,” will be used tomorrow to eliminate free speech altogether. The aim is to silence all opposition to the developing world war which will inevitably draw US youth into the maelstrom if not stopped by the international working class.

As is shown by the recent \$95 billion bipartisan vote in the House for money for Israel’s genocide, the ongoing war with Russia in Ukraine, and for arming Taiwan against China, defending democratic rights necessitates opposing *all* the wars of US imperialism. The record \$825 billion in the US military budget, which exceeds the budget of the next several countries combined, is aimed at preparing for the waging of world war.

However, students and youth cannot stop the attack

on democratic rights, the genocide, and the developing world war alone. Opposition to war and the defense of democratic rights are fundamentally class questions.

Students and youth must turn to the working class, which produces all of the wealth in society and is the social force capable of putting an end to war, inequality, dictatorship and their root cause: the capitalist system. We therefore urge you not only to support this resolution but also to bring the fight to defend democratic rights and stop the genocide into the working class. Appeal for support to workers at auto factories, in logistics, education, transit and healthcare! Build the IYSSE!



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