

California Democrats lead unanimous attack on free speech with AB 715

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Every so often, the political representatives of the ruling class let down their masks and act in lockstep, momentarily dispensing with their factional squabbles to make plain the fundamental unity of their class rule. When this happens, it sends a clear signal: whatever their differences on secondary matters, the Democrats and Republicans are fully united in preserving the dictatorship of capital.

Such is the case with Assembly Bill 715, a dangerous and reactionary measure that passed the California State Assembly with a unanimous 68–0 vote, now heading for Senate. Not a single dissenting voice—no “progressive” objection, no liberal caveat, no democratic handwringing. The political establishment, in perfect harmony, just advanced one of the most authoritarian bills in recent memory.

Sponsored by Assemblymembers Rick Chavez Zbur and Dawn Addis—both Democrats—AB 715 claims to enhance protections against discrimination in public schools, especially against antisemitism and Islamophobia. In reality, the bill has nothing to do with protecting students and everything to do with silencing political dissent.

This is not a defense of the oppressed, but rather an instrument of repression. If enacted, it would erect a vast infrastructure of censorship, ideological policing, and punitive enforcement, all under the fraudulent banner of “anti-discrimination.”

That such a measure should emerge from California—long touted as a liberal bastion—only confirms the trajectory of the Democratic Party, which is now spearheading initiatives that rival the most reactionary policies of the Trump administration. Indeed, AB 715 could have been drafted in the White House war room under Stephen Miller. Instead, it was pushed forward by supposed “progressives” in Sacramento.

The following are the main features of AB 715:

- **Redefining discrimination:** The bill redefines

“discrimination on the basis of religion” to include antisemitism and Islamophobia—terms deliberately left broad and ambiguous. In practice, this paves the way for equating anti-Zionism with antisemitism, a conflation used to criminalize criticism of Israel and its genocidal assault on Gaza.

• **Censorship of curriculum:** It prohibits schools from using any instructional material that might be construed—by the state—as discriminatory. This is a gateway to book bans, map erasures, and historical distortions, particularly around the subject of Palestine. It weaponizes the classroom as a site of ideological purification, policed by the state.

• **Expanded complaint procedures:** Teachers, board members, and even third-party contractors (custodians, food workers, librarians) would be subjected to rapid and severe disciplinary measures if found “in violation”—not of proven discrimination, but of the state’s politically-motivated definitions.

• **A state antisemitism czar:** The bill would establish California’s first “state antisemitism coordinator,” a new bureaucratic role that functions more like an ideological overlord than a civil rights official. This person would be tasked with enforcing conformity to the state’s definition of acceptable political discourse.

• **Arbitrary definitions of nationality and religion:** By extending “nationality” to include perceived ancestry or residency in a country with a dominant religion, the bill sets up a dangerous mechanism for policing thoughts, associations, and affiliations. It opens the door to the persecution of marginalized communities, dissidents, and left-wing organizations under the guise of protecting identity.

• **Unprecedented executive power in schools:** All of this would come with vast new powers for school officials and administrators, who would be given the authority to investigate, discipline, and dismiss based on vague and

ideological criteria.

AB 715 is the legislative culmination of a months-long campaign by the ruling class to suppress the eruption of youth and student protest against the U.S.-backed genocide in Gaza. Across the country, from Columbia University to UC Santa Cruz to UCLA, students and faculty have organized mass demonstrations against Israel's criminal attacks on Gaza and an end to U.S. imperialism. These protests have been met with repression, arrests, and violent police crackdowns.

At Columbia University in New York City, peaceful protesters were rounded up en masse, with faculty dragged off campus for supporting encampments. At UC Santa Cruz, students were assaulted by riot police for daring to speak out against genocide. And at UCLA, a peaceful Gaza solidarity encampment was brutally attacked—first by pro-Israel mobs, and then by the police—with the active collaboration of university administration.

These events are part of a national campaign to criminalize political opposition to Zionism and U.S. militarism. Among the victims of this campaign were students like Mahmoud Khalil, recently released from ICE detention; Momodou Taal, who was forced to leave the US; and Rumeysa Ozturk, who was kidnapped by unidentified US agents for her political views.

What AB 715 does is codify this repression into law. It takes the tactics used against individual students and protest movements and expands them into a permanent legal structure, with enforcement arms and ideological overseers. It ensures that schools become engines of conformity, not education.

That this bill was drafted and championed by Democrats is no accident. It exposes the duplicity of a party that pretends to oppose Trump's fascistic methods while appropriating them for its own purposes. The Democrats have no problem with censorship, authoritarianism, or surveillance—so long as they control the machinery.

It is telling that self-proclaimed “progressives” like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, Cori Bush, and Jamaal Bowman have said nothing about this bill. They maintain studied silence while pro-Palestinian students are beaten and arrested, while teachers are silenced, and while war criminals in Tel Aviv and Washington rain bombs on Gaza.

Same for the 144 House Democrats—led by Sean Casten of Illinois and Brad Sherman of California—who penned a letter criticizing Trump for his criminal proposal to permanently displace Gaza's population, while

simultaneously voting for every military aid package that makes such atrocities possible.

The target of AB 715 is not antisemitism. It is not Islamophobia. It is the working class—especially its most conscious, radical, and internationalist elements.

California's working class is beginning to stir. From teachers to nurses to port workers, resistance is building against austerity, militarism, and war. The state's billionaires—from tech CEOs to real estate developers—understand that they cannot maintain their domination forever without a political crackdown. AB 715 is a preemptive strike. It seeks to frighten teachers into silence, isolate students, and criminalize dissent. It is a weapon of class war disguised as a shield of tolerance.

There is historical precedent for this. In the 1930s, the Nazi regime in Germany similarly conflated criticism of the state with attacks on the “national community.” They imposed rigid ideological conformity on schools, universities, and public life—always in the name of “protecting the people.” The Democrats are not Nazis. But they are on the same road: one of repression, militarism, and dictatorship.

The truth is that fascism cannot be fought by those who enable it. The Democratic Party is not a bulwark against authoritarianism—it is one of its main facilitators. Just as it supported the Iraq War, the Patriot Act, the border wall, and Israel's ethnic cleansing of Gaza, it now seeks to enshrine censorship in California law.

Only the working class, organized independently and consciously, can mount a real defense of democratic rights. This means rejecting both capitalist parties, building rank-and-file committees in every school and workplace, and linking the struggle against censorship to the broader fight against war and exploitation.

The students who protest for Gaza, the teachers who defy censorship, and the workers who strike for dignity are all part of a single global movement: against capitalism, against imperialism, and for socialism.



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