

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Jodi Nemser-Abrahams [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 11, 2026 2:36 PM  
**To:** Public Comments; All City Council  
**Subject:** In opposition of the "Ethical Procurement Ordinance"

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Dear City Councilors,

I am writing to express my opposition for the ordinance motion that is being proposed at tonight's city council meeting by Councilors Ewen-Campen and Wheeler.

This motion specifically targets Israel, would be incredibly impractical and likely illegal to implement, and will take significant resources from our city to pursue that should be used for local needs. It makes our Israeli and Jewish residents feel unwelcome in our city.

I know that you are receiving many emails about this, so I am keeping this short.

Please do not move this forward. Put the energy into getting us a Winter Hill School, keeping our immigrant community safe from ICE, and improving housing security.

Thank you,  
Jodi Nemser-Abrahams  
Ward 5

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Lisa Shatz [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 11, 2026 4:21 PM  
**To:** Public Comments; Mayor's Office; Jon Link; Wilfred Mbah; Ben Ewen-Campen; [REDACTED] Emily Hardt; Jesse Clingan; Kristen Strezo; Lance Davis;  
**Subject:** Please Vote Down the Proposed BDS Ordinance

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Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed BDS ordinance.

Many supporters of BDS view it as a form of political advocacy. However, many Jews experience anti-Zionism differently. For most Jews, Zionism is not an abstract political ideology but the belief that the Jewish people, like other peoples, have the right to self-determination in their historic homeland. When that right is denied to Jews alone, many perceive it as discriminatory.

Many Jews view anti-Zionism not merely as criticism of Israeli government policies, but as opposition to the existence of the world's only Jewish state. Reasonable people can disagree about Israeli policies, just as Israelis themselves do every day. But denying Jews the right to national self-determination while supporting that right for other peoples is experienced by many Jews as a form of prejudice rather than legitimate political criticism.

A BDS ordinance may therefore be understood by many Jewish residents not as a statement about a particular government policy, but as a measure directed at a core component of Jewish identity and peoplehood.

I respectfully ask that, before adopting this ordinance, you consider its impact on Jewish residents and whether it may contribute to exclusion and division rather than constructive dialogue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Shatz  
Brookline, MA  
TMM p 11

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Lisa Shatz [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2026 2:50 AM  
**To:** Public Comments; Mayor's Office; Jon Link; Wilfred Mbah; Ben Ewen-Campen; [REDACTED]; Emily Hardt; Jesse Clingan; Kristen Strezo; Lance Davis;  
**Subject:** Concern about the BDS Ordinance  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Dear Members of the Somerville City Council,

I am writing regarding the proposed divestment ordinance currently under consideration.

I recognize that many supporters of this measure are motivated by sincere concern for human rights and by a desire to reduce suffering. I respect those intentions. Nevertheless, I urge the Council to reconsider this approach.

The question is not whether governments, including Israel's government, may be criticized. In a democracy, criticism of government policies is both legitimate and necessary.

The question is why Somerville is considering using its municipal authority to single out one nation for special treatment.

The world contains numerous territorial disputes, occupations, armed conflicts, and human-rights abuses. Yet municipalities rarely adopt ordinances directed at those situations. When Israel alone becomes the focus of governmental action, many Jews understandably ask why a different standard is being applied to the world's only Jewish state.

For many Jews, Israel is not merely a foreign country. It represents the national self-determination of a people that endured centuries of persecution, expulsion, and ultimately genocide. As a result, actions directed uniquely at Israel are often experienced differently than criticism of other nations.

I recognize that supporters of this ordinance may reject that characterization. However, I hope the Council will consider not only its intentions but also its impact on members of the Jewish community.

History offers another reason for caution.

Throughout history, some of the people most convinced they were acting in the name of morality, religion, science, progress, or human rights directed extraordinary scrutiny and condemnation toward Jews. They rarely viewed themselves as prejudiced. They saw themselves as serving a higher cause.

This does not mean that criticism of Israel is antisemitic. It does mean that moral certainty is not a guarantee against bias. When a movement applies exceptional standards to the world's only Jewish state, it is reasonable to ask whether that distinction is justified.

I am also concerned about the role of municipal government in matters such as this. Somerville residents depend on their city government to provide services, maintain infrastructure, support schools, ensure public safety, and strengthen the community. International conflicts are complex, emotionally charged, and far removed from the responsibilities that local governments are best equipped to address.

At a time when antisemitism is rising across the United States and around the world, I believe elected officials should be especially careful before adopting measures that many Jewish residents reasonably perceive as targeting a central component of Jewish identity and peoplehood.

I respectfully urge the Council to reject this ordinance and instead seek ways to promote dialogue, coexistence, and mutual understanding among all members of the community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Shatz, Town Meeting Member p 11  
Brookline, Massachusetts