

# NY Rep. Bowman withdraws support for bill to promote Abraham Accords

Congressman, who has been less critical of Israel than fellow Squad members, tells constituents he's now convinced the normalization agreements are designed to isolate Palestinians

By **RON KAMPEAS**

17 February 2022, 5:41 am



Jamaal Bowman speaks during his primary-night party, June 23, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/ Eduardo Munoz Alvarez)

WASHINGTON (JTA) — US Rep. Jamaal Bowman, the New York Democrat who has been less critical of Israel than other members of the progressive “Squad,” is dropping his support for a bill that would help Israel expand normalization agreements with Arab countries.

In a letter to constituents, Bowman said he has been persuaded that the normalization agreements, launched in 2020 as the Abraham Accords, serve to isolate the Palestinians, and do not advance a just outcome. The letter was first reported Tuesday by Jewish Currents.

He also expressed concern that some of the incentives for the accords are at odds with his values. The United Arab Emirates has scored the sale of advanced fighter jets and Morocco earned US recognition of its claim to the disputed Western Sahara.

Critics of the accords say they remove from the Palestinians one of the few leverages they have over Israel: full acceptance in the Middle East.

The bill has overwhelming bipartisan support and Bowman’s change of mind won’t stop it from passing. Under the accords, brokered by the Trump administration, Israel normalized relations with the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco. The bill would help facilitate normalization with other countries.

Bowman is a member of the “Squad,” a grouping of six progressives that includes Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who says Israel should not exist as a Jewish state, and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, who has called Israel an apartheid state. Bowman, however — representing a district that encompasses substantive Jewish communities in the Bronx and Westchester — has not been as adamant in his Israel criticism. Alone in the Squad, he backed additional funding last year for the Iron Dome anti-missile systems for Israel. So did the vast majority of the party’s Progressive Caucus.



President Donald Trump, center, with from left, Bahrain Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump, and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan, during the Abraham Accords signing ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Bowman in the letter said a recent visit to Israel and the West Bank helped bring about his change of mind. He did not note that J Street, the liberal Jewish Middle East policy group, organized the visit, nor that the group backs the bill that would expand the Abraham Accords.

Some progressives criticized Bowman for going on a trip with J Street, which describes itself as pro-Israel.

While the move by Bowman appeared aimed at pleasing some of his more left-wing constituencies, the Democratic Socialists of America BDS and Palestine Solidarity Working Group [tweeted](#) that Bowman only followed through on a promise he made to withdraw his sponsorship for HR 2748 “after newly drawn district borders now exclude Riverdale, an area with a heavy Zionist constituency.”

*Times of Israel staff contributed to this report*