# Anti-BDS bill advanced by Senate, U.S.-Israel security ties boosted

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<https://www.jpost.com/American-Politics/Senate-pushes-anti-BDS-bill-forward-578959>

The U.S. Senate took a step closer toward passing a bill that will tackle the anti-BDS movement in America, boost security cooperation with Israel and Jordan as well as increase sanctions on Syria.

The Republican-introduced legislation had been on standstill amid a government sanction. On Monday, a major procedural hurdle was passed, allowing the bill to move forward.

With the vote of  74-19, the bill is likely to pass in the Senate when the actual vote takes place later in January.

Senators who voted against the motion included Kirsten Gillibrand, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren.

This is the fourth vote since Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida introduced the bill at the beginning of the new congress.

Democrats, including those supportive of the legislation, refused to vote to proceed with any legislation of any kind throughout the historic government shutdown that endured through last week.

Now that the shutdown is over, Rubio and his GOP colleagues reintroduced the bill for a cloture vote.

“The Senate will once again move to take up our bill to support Israel, give local and state governments the right to boycott BDS and punish human rights abuses in Syria,” Rubio tweeted, referring to the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. “Democrats said they were blocking it until shutdown ended. So no excuse not to move to it now.”

Rubio’s bill includes different language than another BDS-related proposal from the last congress, the Israel Anti-Boycott Act, that had attracted bipartisan support. The number of overlapping legislation on the matter has caused confusion and conflation even amongst policymakers on Capitol Hill.

That legislation had carefully negotiated provisions that assuaged [Democratic concerns](https://www.jpost.com/American-Politics/Left-wing-pushes-back-against-last-minute-effort-to-pass-anti-BDS-bill-574894) the bill would infringe on Americans’ constitutional rights to free speech, assembly and boycott.

Supporters of the old legislation say that it built on decades-old, court-tested policy against discriminating on the basis of national origin.

“The bill last year dealt with international organizations boycotting Israel — it extended existing US law on the Arab boycotts,” a Democratic source said. “This bill is very different. It allows state laws to not be preempted by federal law.”

“Neither bill is making the case for these state laws to stand based on First Amendment rights — it’s based on regulations of interstate commerce,” the source said. “Even the American Civil Liberties Union, which opposes these bills, acknowledges that they only challenges the spirit of free speech protections.”

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, supports both measures and is actively recruiting Democratic votes for its bipartisan passage.

And at least some Democrats are expected to support the legislation. The Jewish Democratic Council for America endorsed the bill on Monday while also castigating GOP members for using Israel as a political foil during the government shutdown.

"JDCA voiced concern that Republicans were politicizing Israel by repeatedly proposing a bill during a shutdown that they know wouldn’t pass”,” said Halie Soifer, executive director of the JDCA. “But with the shutdown over, I think we’re going to see a different vote, and JDCA supports S. 1, the reason being that it is consistent with our strong opposition to the BDS movement.”