



Association of Legal Aid Attorneys UAW 2325 (AFL-CIO)



March 25, 2024

Via email

Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6100

Chairwoman Foxx,

We, the Amalgamated Council of UAW Local 2325, the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (“ALAA” or “UAW Local 2325”),¹ write on behalf of the union’s membership in response to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce’s subpoena, served on March 11, 2024, which follows your request for information (RFI) dated January 29, 2024. Both requests relate to our democratically-passed “Resolution Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza, an End to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, and Support for Workers’ Political Speech.”² This Resolution calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, cessation of military aid to Israel, and an end to Israeli apartheid, settler occupation, and genocide. Both the RFI and the subpoena contain concerning and untrue mischaracterizations of UAW Local 2325, our internal democratic processes and representation of our membership, and the Resolution, including baseless accusations of antisemitic behavior and undemocratic conduct. We unequivocally stand by the democratically-passed Resolution and reject these mischaracterizations. In addition, the information sought by the RFI and subpoena implicates the First Amendment rights and autonomy of our membership and our union, including the right to engage in democratic decision-making and free speech without being subjected to governmental overreach and unfounded inquiries by Congress. UAW Local 2325 will not produce any documents whose production would violate our membership’s constitutional rights.³

¹ The Amalgamated Council is composed of the constitutional officers of UAW Local 2325 and elected representatives from each of our 31 chapters.

² Association of Legal Aid Attorneys - UAW 2325, [Resolution Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza, an End to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, and Support for Workers’ Political Speech](#) (Dec. 19, 2023).

³ Our legal counsel has further addressed these constitutional deficiencies in a separate legal response, provided on March 25, 2024.

I. Background

At the conclusion of a transparent democratic process, on December 19, 2023, the membership of UAW Local 2325 passed a “Resolution Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza, an End to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, and Support for Workers’ Political Speech” by a margin of 65% to 35%. The Resolution demands an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, an end to Israeli apartheid and occupation of Palestine, and an end to United States military aid to Israel. The Resolution also documents the growing censorship against workers and students who express support for Palestinian rights, reaffirms UAW Local 2325’s commitment to zealously defend its members against retaliation for protected First Amendment activity, and denounces *both* antisemitism and Islamophobia.

The union passed the Resolution in solidarity with Palestinian trade unions⁴ and other unions calling for Palestinian liberation and in response to Israel’s indiscriminate bombing and genocide in Gaza, which has killed over 30,000 Palestinians and displaced nearly two million.⁵ To date, over two hundred unions representing millions of workers have joined in the call for a ceasefire, including the UAW International.⁶ Such action clearly aligns with UAW Local 2325’s historic commitment to human rights worldwide, which has resulted in the union taking positions against the Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and South African apartheid, and in support of human rights in the Philippines.⁷

II. The House Committee’s Unconstitutional Intrusion Into Internal Union Deliberations and Speech

On January 29, 2024, this Committee requested from UAW Local 2325 a broad swath of documents and information as part of a purported oversight inquiry “related to a contentious vote on a controversial resolution at [UAW Local 2325].”⁸ UAW Local 2325 declined to respond to the Committee’s blatant intrusion on our union’s constitutional rights and its bad-faith mischaracterization of the resolution. The Committee then issued a subpoena on March 11,⁹ which similarly requests six categories of documents related to the Resolution. The Committee’s inquiry and subpoena raise serious—and untrue—accusations about UAW Local 2325 and its

⁴ [An Urgent Call from Palestinian Trade Unions: End all Complicity. Stop Arming Israel. Workers in Palestine](#) (Oct. 16, 2023).

⁵ Human Rights Watch, [Israel Not Complying with World Court Order in Genocide Case](#) (Feb. 26, 2024); Associated Press, [Gaza Death Toll Tops 30,000 as Over 100 Killed in Aid Convoy Violence](#) (Feb. 29, 2024).

⁶ United Auto Workers, [UAW Statement on Israel and Palestine](#) (Dec. 1, 2023); [National Labor Network for Ceasefire](#) (accessed March 23, 2024); *see also* [Labor for Palestine](#) (accessed March 23, 2024).

⁷ Rank and file members of ALAA UAW-2325, [Digest of Select Statements and Positions on Matters of Public Concern by the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys UAW 2325](#) (Nov. 26, 2023).

⁸ House Committee on Education and the Workforce, [Letter to UAW Local 2325](#) (Jan. 29, 2024).

⁹ House Committee on Education and the Workforce, [Subpoena to UAW Local 2325](#) (March 11, 2024).

leadership; wholly mischaracterize and miscomprehend the Resolution; and misconstrue our union and its membership's mission and work.

It is clear from the language of the inquiry, the subpoena, and public statements made by Chairwoman Foxx that the Committee's core objection to the Resolution is based on animus towards the political views expressed therein.¹⁰ It is also clear that the Committee disagrees with, and actively seeks to discourage, any expressed union support for Palestine, workers' free speech, and an end to the Israeli settler occupation, apartheid, and genocide of Palestinians. The Committee has no jurisdiction to retaliate against a union or its members for the exercise of core First Amendment rights to organize and advocate on matters of public concern. We urge the Committee to strictly adhere to the Constitution's democratic principles and guaranteed freedoms, including the freedom to speak in support of Palestinian liberation.

We reject the Committee's claim that the passage of the Resolution was undemocratic. The Resolution was passed with full notice to all members and after vigorous debate. A majority of members—1,067—voted for the resolution, while a minority of members—570—exercised their right to vote against it. UAW Local 2325 is a democracy. As in any democracy, not all members will share the same political views or agree on every issue, but our democratic processes provide space for a diversity of opinions. Indeed, individuals both within and without UAW Local 2325 continue to express their support for, and opposition to, the Resolution in various fora and through various means. These actions highlight the robust and ongoing debate about the dire situation in Gaza and Palestine—a debate in which UAW Local 2325 and our members are entitled to participate without congressional interference.

Similarly, the Committee's characterization of the Resolution as an antisemitic attack is inaccurate, harmful, and risks undermining closely held principles of many of our Jewish union members. UAW Local 2325 vehemently condemns all forms of antisemitism. Anti-Zionism is not antisemitism; criticism of the state of Israel and its apartheid policies in occupied Palestine is not antisemitism. We recognize that Jewish members have a range of views on this issue—a fact underscored by the 119 Jewish members of UAW Local 2325 who have signed an open letter reaffirming their commitment to the Resolution, and specifically underscoring the connection between their Jewish values and their opposition to the genocide in Gaza.¹¹ The Committee's spurious conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism intentionally delegitimizes the views held by many of our members, erases a long history of anti-Zionism within the Jewish community, and distracts from the serious problem of actual antisemitism.

¹⁰ See, e.g., House Committee on Education and the Workforce, [Letter to UAW Local 2325](#) (Jan. 29, 2024) (referring to content of Resolution as “controversial,” “concerning,” and “deplorable”); House Committee on Education and the Workforce, [Subpoena to UAW Local 2325](#) (March 11, 2024) (repeating characterization that content of Resolution is “controversial” and “concerning”).

¹¹ [NOT IN OUR NAME: NEVER AGAIN IS NOW - A Statement by Jewish Members of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys-UAW Local 2325](#) (Feb. 8, 2024).

Finally, the Committee’s allegation that our Resolution does not advance the legal interest of our clients or our mission statements reveals a profound misunderstanding of our work. Our union’s mission statement, as set forth in Article III of our local bylaws, outlines our commitment to maintaining “relations with other labor organizations and work[ing] cooperatively with other unions for the advancement of the interests of *our members, our clients and of poor and working people.*”¹² We also “advocate through political outreach for the advancement of the interests of *our membership, our clients and of poor and working people in general.*”¹³ Every day, UAW Local 2325 members defend our clients and their communities against state violence in all its forms, including policing, incarceration, family separation, deportation, surveillance, and eviction. Our workplace struggles, our clients’ struggles, and the struggles of workers around the world, including in Palestine, are indelibly intertwined. Our fight for humanity and for organized labor does not stop at the courtroom door.

III. Conclusion

Just as we answered the urgent call of Palestinian trade unions to demand a stop to the U.S. government’s arming of Israel, to support Palestinian liberation, and speak out against the ongoing Israeli occupation, apartheid, and genocide of the Palestinian people, we call on congressional members and sibling unions to defend organized labor’s right to organize and engage in free speech and free association. Democracy and free speech should be encouraged, not stifled or repressed, least of all by Congress. UAW Local 2325 will continue to represent the interests of our membership and defend the union from demands that threaten union democracy and freedom of speech, including our constitutional right to join the call for a free Palestine.

In solidarity with all workers,

The Amalgamated Council of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys - UAW Local 2325

¹² Bylaws of The Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, Amalgamated Local Union 2325 of The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace And Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), AFL-CIO, Art. III (amended Feb. 14, 2023) (emphasis added).

¹³ *Id.* (emphasis added).