

**Press Release**

**Organization: Massachusetts Residents for International Human Rights**

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**Subject: Results of local ballot questions on equal rights for Palestinians**

## **Voters Choose Equality: 57 % vote for ending Israeli government discrimination against Palestinians**

### **Vote echoes 2008 vote in Somerville and Cambridge)**

Voters in the 34<sup>th</sup> Middlesex district of South Medford – West Somerville, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex district of Arlington, the 15<sup>th</sup> Suffolk district of Boston (Jamaica Plain), and the 29<sup>th</sup> Middlesex of Watertown voted "Yes" on a Question that asked: **"Shall the state representative from this district be instructed to vote in favor of a non-binding resolution calling on the federal government to support the right of all people, including non-Jewish Palestinian citizens of Israel, to live free from laws that give more rights to people of one religion than another?"**

**The winning percentages were 55%, 54%, 66%, 61% respectively. In total 30,778 people voted Yes (57%) and 22,813 voted No.**

**Voters in one district, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Suffolk district of Charlestown – Chelsea voted 48 % in favor but came up just short in passing the ballot question.**

**The victories in 4 of 5 districts came even though only 1 municipal elected supported the ballot question. Nearly 5 dozen elected officials were contacted and all except one, supported the ballot question.**

In 2008, 73% of voters in the 25<sup>th</sup> Middlesex district (Central Cambridge) and 62% of Somerville voters in 27<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District (Central Somerville) voted Yes on the same question. The ballot question has carried in 7 of 8 cities in the last two years.

John Spritzler, a Brighton resident of the Massachusetts Residents for International Human Rights (MRIHR) says "We're ecstatic. Voters showed that they support the principle of equality and don't support Israeli laws that discriminate. When given a chance to choose between the principle of equality versus the Zionist principle of inequality (*i.e.* that Israel must be a Jewish state in which the sovereign authority is "the Jewish people" and not all citizens equally) then Americans chose equality, even when few if any politicians will support openly equality.

Kathy Felgran, a Watertown resident of MRIHR, stated “the road to lasting peace is equality for all, and the recognition of the oneness of all humanity. It’s heartening that the majority of residents agreed”.

Spritzler believes that MRIHR can help Americans throughout the nation understand this: the principles of equality and democracy that they overwhelmingly support, are the opposite of the principles of inequality and top-down control that our politicians and mass media defend, by telling us lies about Israel and about Palestinians.

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MRIHR opposes all attacks by anyone, anywhere, and at any time where unarmed civilian casualties are clearly likely, whether the attacks are aggressive or retaliatory. At the same time we support self-defense actions and armed resistance against individuals who use physical violence to oppress people.