

27 Tammuz 5778
July 10, 2018

Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister
MK Yoel (Yuli) Edelstein, Speaker of the Knesset
MK Amir Ohana, Chairman, Joint Committee
Members of the Committee
Members of the Knesset



en.idi.org.il

Re: The version of the Nation-State Bill to be voted on in the Knesset

Dear Sirs:

As the vote on this crucial bill, which defines the character of the State of Israel, draws near, we had hoped to send you a congratulatory letter emphasizing the significance of the occasion and the great privilege that fell to your share.

Unfortunately, we cannot bring ourselves to do that.

It is only natural that the approval of a law defining the character of the State of Israel should have been underpinned by a broad consensus. While it is true that there are many differences of opinion among us in Israeli society, we can still assume that the Zionist majority of the State of Israel — on the right, the center, and the left — can agree upon the state's character despite differences of opinion they may hold on other issues.

The version of the law that has been placed before you has not succeeded in gaining this type of consensus — a fact that should serve as a warning light for those who proposed it.

The following pages contain a detailed professional opinion that addresses the clauses of the law. Many have warned you that the Acceptance Committees clause, the change in status of the Arabic language, and the damage to our relationship with Diaspora Jewry are constitutionally problematic.

We second the critique on these issues, as well as on other problematic elements. We wish to state from the outset that the fact that the law's first and essential clause does not include the commitment to equality or even the phrase "a Jewish and democratic state in the spirit of the principles of the Declaration of Independence" will constitute a perpetual tragedy.

We ask you to oppose the law in its present form and act to amend it before it is brought for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Yohanan Plesner
President

Professor Yuval Shany
Vice President of Research

Professor Yedidia Stern
Vice President of Research

The Israel Democracy Institute

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