

Warren Says She Supports Sanders's Bid to Block Israel Weapons Deal

Sharon Zhang : 8-10 minutes : 11/15/2024

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Sen. Elizabeth Warren speaks at Direct Tire & Auto Service in Watertown, Massachusetts, on February 22, 2024.
David L. Ryan / The Boston Globe via Getty Images

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) is backing a bid by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) to block a massive weapons transfer to Israel by the Biden administration, citing violations of U.S. law in backing Israel's assault on Gaza.

Warren said [in a statement on Thursday](#) that she is supporting a joint resolution of disapproval brought forth by Sanders to block the sale of weapons to Israel. Such resolutions allow Congress to block a foreign weapons deal initiated by the executive branch.

The Massachusetts senator specifically cited the Biden administration's refusal this week to [uphold its own pledge](#) last month to withhold weapons to Israel if it did not comply with a U.S. request to increase humanitarian aid into Gaza within 30 days. On Tuesday, the end of the 30-day period, the administration said that it has not assessed that Israel is in violation of U.S. law, despite Israel not only not complying but also worsening the aid blockade in recent weeks.

"Thirty days later, the Biden administration acknowledged that Israel's actions had not significantly expanded food, water and basic necessities for desperate Palestinian civilians," Warren said in a statement. "Despite [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu's failure to meet the United States' demands, the Biden administration has taken no action to restrict the flow of offensive weapons."

"The failure by the Biden administration to follow U.S. law and to suspend arms shipments is a grave mistake that undermines American credibility worldwide. If this administration will not act, Congress must step up to enforce U.S. law and hold the Netanyahu government accountable through a joint resolution of disapproval," the senator continued.

Sanders [announced](#) on Wednesday that he will be bringing forth his joint resolutions of disapproval, aimed at blocking \$20 billion [of the Biden administration's planned weapons transfers](#) to Israel, for a vote in the Senate next week.

Warren did not specify which resolutions of disapproval she supports. Lawmakers often specify that they are opposed to "offensive" weapons transfers to Israel but support "defensive" weapons — though advocates have long argued that there is no practical difference when "defensive" weapons, like supplies for Israel's Iron Dome, just give Israel leeway to attack countries without fear of damage from retaliation.

Sanders has brought forth [six resolutions in total](#), each targeting a different portion of the sale. Several of them, targeting tank rounds, JDAMs, JDAM receivers and mortar cartridges, were co-introduced by Senators Peter Welch (D-Vermont) and Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon), but Sanders was alone in introducing the largest part of the sale, involving \$18.8 billion worth of fighter aircraft and upgrades to Israel's arsenal of F-15s. Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) has [joined the resolution](#) regarding blocking the transfer of tank rounds.

"There is no longer any doubt that Netanyahu's extremist government is in clear violation of U.S. and international law as it wages a barbaric war against the Palestinian people in Gaza," said Sanders. "The United States cannot continue to be complicit in this war by supplying more military aid and weaponry to the Netanyahu government. Congress must act to block these arms sales."

Sanders says that the sales would be in violation of the Foreign Assistance Act, which specifies that the U.S. must not send weapons to entities preventing the delivery of U.S. humanitarian aid. [Experts](#), [advocates](#) and [lawmakers](#) have repeatedly said that the administration is violating international and domestic law in sending Israel weapons, but U.S. officials [have instead lied](#) about and provided cover for Israel's genocidal slaughter in order to continue fueling the weapons pipeline.

Stopping the flow of weapons to Israel from the U.S., Israel's top foreign military backer, is one of the only ways to end the genocide in Gaza and Israel's aggression in Lebanon and beyond, advocates have long said.

Warren's statement came after a group of 95 organizations in Massachusetts [sent a letter](#) to Warren and Sen. Ed Markey (D-Massachusetts) asking them to vote for the resolutions.

"The [resolutions] would block the transfer of the types of weapons that Israel have used in strikes that have killed thousands of civilians, including aid workers and journalists, in Gaza over the last year," the letter said.

Similarly, on Wednesday, a group of 95 New York-based [organizations wrote a letter](#) to New York Senators Kristen Gillibrand (D) and Chuck Schumer (D) urging them to back Sanders's effort. The letter campaign was led by the National Iranian American Council's respective state chapters.

Truthout Is Preparing to Meet Trump's Agenda With Resistance at Every Turn

Dear *Truthout* Community,

If you feel rage, despondency, confusion and deep fear today, you are not alone. We're feeling it too. We are heartsick. Facing down Trump's fascist agenda, we are desperately worried about the most vulnerable people among us, including our loved ones and everyone in the *Truthout* community, and our minds are racing a million miles a minute to try to map out all that needs to be done.

We must give ourselves space to grieve and feel our fear, feel our rage, and keep in the forefront of our mind the stark truth that millions of real human lives are on the line. And simultaneously, we've got to get to work, take stock of our resources, and prepare to throw ourselves full force into the movement.

Journalism is a linchpin of that movement. **Even as we are reeling, we're summoning up all the energy we can to face down what's coming, because we know that one of the sharpest weapons against fascism is publishing the truth.**

There are many terrifying planks to the Trump agenda, and we plan to devote ourselves to reporting thoroughly on each one and, crucially, covering the movements resisting them. We also recognize that Trump is a dire threat to journalism itself, and that we must take this seriously from the outset.

Last week, the four of us sat down to have some hard but necessary conversations about *Truthout* under a Trump presidency. How would we defend our publication from an avalanche of far right lawsuits that seek to bankrupt us? How would we keep our reporters safe if they need to cover outbreaks of political violence, or if they are targeted by authorities? How will we urgently produce the practical analysis, tools and movement coverage that you need right now — breaking through our normal routines to meet a terrifying moment in ways that best serve you?

It will be a tough, scary four years to produce social justice-driven journalism. **We need to deliver news, strategy, liberatory ideas, tools and movement-sparking solutions with a force that we never have had to before.** And at the same time, we desperately need to protect our ability to do so.

We know this is such a painful moment and donations may understandably be the last thing on your mind. But we must ask for your support, which is needed in a new and urgent way.

We promise we will kick into an even higher gear to give you truthful news that cuts against the disinformation and vitriol and hate and violence. We promise to publish analyses that will serve the needs of the movements we all rely on to survive the next four years, and even build for the future. We promise to be responsive, to recognize you as members of our community with a vital stake and voice in this work.

Please dig deep if you can, but a donation of any amount will be a truly meaningful and tangible action in this cataclysmic historical moment. We are presently looking for 340 new monthly donors in the next 5 days.

We're with you. Let's do all we can to move forward together.

With love, rage, and solidarity,

Maya, Negin, Saima, and Ziggy