

Nature of Congress Legislation on Israel In 2025
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Executive Summary

This report examines the content of Israel-related legislation in the 119th U.S. Congress, distinguishing between supportive, critical, and neutral measures based on whether they produce tangible material, institutional, or legal consequences, rather than merely expressing (dis)approval. Three main findings emerge. Firstly, Israel-related legislation is dominated by neutral measures, followed by supportive legislation, while critical legislation remains negligible. Furthermore, supportive legislation is disproportionately sponsored by Republican lawmakers, whereas all critical measures originate from Democratic sponsors, and neutral legislation is more evenly distributed across all parties. Finally, supportive legislation tends to attract broader cosponsorship than neutral measures, while critical legislation appears highly supported but is too limited in number to draw general conclusions.

Literature Review

The consistent, bipartisan support for Israel within the United States Congress is, as Cavari & Nyer (2014) argue, not uniform across all types of legislative activity. Throughout time, Republicans and Democrats have become more uncoordinated in how they express support for Israel, with Republicans more willing to commit to more productive and substantial legislation. Rosenson et al. (2009) find that most Israel-related legislation consists of symbolic resolutions, while a smaller subset involves concrete policy actions. In their own research, in the 24 pieces of legislation they studied, 14 (58%) were symbolic. Rosenson et al. (2005) finds that support prevails when Congress considers measures that express broad support for Israel but do not entail concrete policy commitments or material consequences. However, as legislation engages more directly with controversial issues, partisan divisions become more pronounced. Taken together, the literature suggests that congressional behavior toward Israel cannot be fully understood without accounting for the nature of the legislation itself.

Method

This report uses a dataset compiled of Israel-related legislation introduced in the 119th U.S. Congress. It consists of 133 bills and resolutions, identified through keyword-based searches on Congress.gov, using “Israel” as the primary search term. The dataset records sponsor party, number of cosponsors, and cosponsor party affiliation. It also includes the classification of legislation into three categories: supportive, critical, and neutral. Supportive legislation are measures that provide material or institutional

support to Israel, such as military aid, joint research initiatives, or sanctions targeting mutual enemies. Critical legislation describes measures that seek to impose constraints on U.S.-Israel cooperation, including restrictions or conditions on military aid. Neutral legislation encompasses measures that reference Israel but do not produce direct policy consequences, including symbolic resolutions, commemorations, and expressions of approval or disapproval without direct policy effect. For example, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026, is coded as supportive because it allocates funding to US.-Israel missile defense cooperation; the Ceasefire Compliance Act of 2026 is coded as critical because it harshly conditions US military support to Israel; and non-binding resolutions expressing (dis)approval without direct policy effect are coded as neutral.

Distribution of Legislative Positions

Israel-related legislation in the 119th Congress is predominantly composed of neutral measures, as shown in figure 1. Of the 133 bills in the dataset, 89 (67%) are classified as neutral, compared to 41 (31%) supportive and only 3 (2%) critical measures. In contrast, supportive legislation represents the primary form of substantial legislative activity. Critical legislation, by comparison, is very limited, representing only a negligible share of the dataset. The near absence of substantively critical measures, alongside the concentration of concrete policy actions within the supportive category, indicates that when legislation moves beyond symbolic expression to produce substantial policy outcomes, it is more likely to do so in a supportive rather than critical manner.

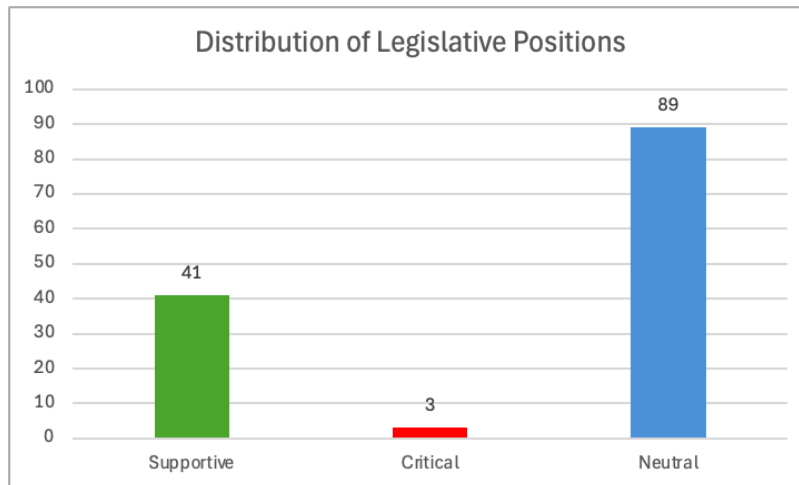


Figure 1: Distribution of Legislative Positions

Party Sponsorship Patterns

Sponsorship patterns reveal a clear partisan divide as shown in figure 2. Supportive legislation is

disproportionately sponsored by Republican lawmakers, who account for 76% (31) of supportive bills, compared to 24% (10) sponsored by Democrats. In contrast, all critical legislation was introduced by Democratic sponsors. Neutral legislation is more evenly distributed across parties, with 36 (40%) sponsored by Republicans, 43% (38) by Democrats, and 17% (15) by Independents. These patterns suggest that partisan differences are most pronounced in substantively consequential legislation. At the same time, the relatively even distribution of neutral legislation indicates that general engagement with Israel-related issues remains bipartisan, particularly in the context of symbolic or non-binding measures.

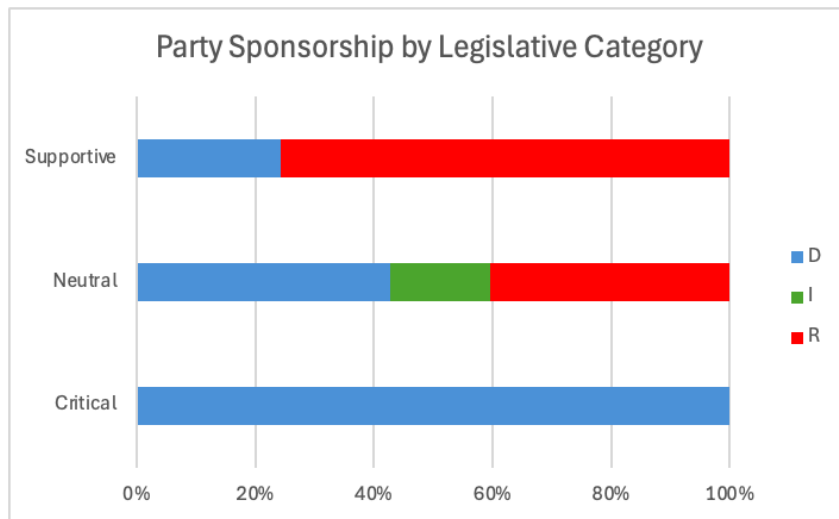


Figure 2: Party Sponsorship by Legislative Category

Cosponsorship Distribution

Cosponsorship patterns vary across categories of legislation, as seen in figure 3. Supportive legislation exhibits a higher average number of cosponsors (mean of 15.17) compared to neutral measures (mean of 11.53), indicating broader participation. At the same time, median levels remain low across both categories (5 for supportive and 3 for neutral), suggesting that most bills receive limited backing. The gap between mean and median values indicates a positively skewed distribution. Neutral legislation in particular tends to attract lower levels of participation, with most measures receiving minimal cosponsorship. Critical legislation appears to attract comparatively high levels of cosponsorship (mean of 28.33 and a median of 28). However, this pattern is based on only three observations. Therefore, the small number of critical cases limits the extent to which broader conclusions can be drawn regarding coalition dynamics in this category.

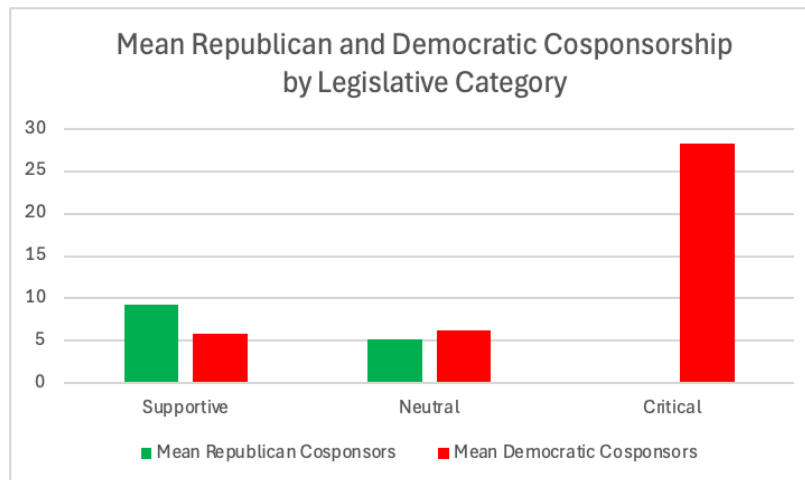


Figure 3: Mean Republican and Democratic Cosponsorship by Legislative Category

Conclusion

Israel-related legislation in the 119th Congress is dominated by neutral, largely symbolic measures, while substantively consequential legislation is less frequent. Among measures that produce concrete policy outcomes, supportive legislation is more prevalent and primarily consists of actions such as military aid, joint initiatives, and sanctions targeting adversarial actors. In contrast, most measures expressing disapproval of Israeli actions do not carry substantive policy consequences. Partisan differences are most visible in the sponsorship of substantive legislation, whereas broader engagement through neutral measures remains relatively bipartisan.

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