

Mia Rodriguez

1/9/23

Bhsec Bronx

## Jamaal Bowman

Jamaal Bowman is the congressman of New York's 16th district which includes northern parts of the Bronx, Yonkers, New Rochelle and Mount Vernon. He has a doctorate in education and founded his own middle school called Cornerstone Academy for Social Action or CASA for short. He faces hatred for his opinions on the Israel and Hamas war. He has many Jewish followers, some who like his ideology and stand on the issue and some who criticize his ideas as if they were jokes. Those people believe Bowman's ideas are foolish and shouldn't be taken seriously.

Jamaal Bowman states the war between Hamas and Israel is futile. His Jewish followers, which includes about 60 constituents, agree. However, his adversaries say he could put many lives in jeopardy and bring about new people to challenge him for his position as a congressman. An article written by Tony Aiello states, "Bowman, a 2nd-term congressman, boycotted the July speech to Congress by Israeli President Herzog and now supports a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas

War.” This prompted a response from some people who opposed him such as Guy Baron where he states “You're calling for some weird cease-fire that won't accomplish anything other than give Hamas, which is basically an ISIS organization, time to regroup and kill more Jews,” prompting another response from Bowman himself saying “‘Never say, ever, that I'm OK with the killing of Jews. Never say that, ever, because this is insane,’ Bowman says Israel cannot respond to Hamas' war crimes with war crimes of its own. He believes that's what's happening and that's why he supports a cease-fire” (CBS.com). Bowman seems to face backlash for misinterpretations in what he said and what he is fighting for.

This all happened just because he had an opinion that people didn't like. He states in a speech, “There is no mention of a two state solution [...] I cannot in good conscience vote for a resolution which flagrantly ignores such devastation of life and ignores measures towards long term peace. In order to save Israeli and Palestinian lives now and in the future, and fight the rise of antisemitism, Islamophobia and all hate, we need to respond in this moment with leadership, balance and a spirit towards true and long lasting peace, not war.”

(bowman.house.gov). Bowman is actively fighting against the hate that is not apparent to people's eyes when looking at the war. He advocates for unison in the termination of hate toward these nations and their people whether they are right or wrong.

Bowman has not only spoken out against the war and against antisemitism but also acted on the issue. He reached out to schools to add a class that focuses on the war and bring awareness of the war's atrocities. Arno Rosenfeld, a reporter for Forward paper states, "His message to President Joe Biden comes as several universities have moved to ban Students for Justice in Palestine, a student group associated with a number of strident demonstrations against Israel in recent weeks, while other schools are facing pressure from donors and alumni over an alleged failure to protect Jewish students," which is added on to by Bowman's own words in an interview with the author elaborating saying "We have to make sure we are getting people who are doing wrong and causing harm and holding them accountable"(Forward.com). This shows Bowman's actions by saying he is actively pushing to get people all on the same page and not taking anyone's side because it can hurt people. He is a peaceful activist. He wants the people he represents and hopefully the people in other states to stop hating the two sides and stop spreading hate toward each other over a war.

Bowman's followers help shield him from the hate he receives from his opposers. reporter Nicholas Fandos said, "He is not 'anti-Israel,' and to refer to him that way is to deliberately distort his record, which includes many votes in favor of military and economic aid to Israel,"(New York Times). These people call themselves the "Jews for Jamaal" . They try to help him achieve his goals of peace

and end the war while telling people he isn't for or against anyone. Luke Tress also reported how “Bowman was one of just 10 members of Congress to vote against a resolution. Standing with Israel as it defends itself against the barbaric war launched by Hamas and other terrorists.” He likewise voted against a resolution condemning support in campuses for terror groups including Hamas” (The Times of Israel). This seems to be fuel to the opposers fire because he wants this war to end by not helping or condemning either nation. The same news article states “More than two dozen rabbis in Bowman’s district, including Hoffman, wrote a letter to Latimer nine days after the October 7 attack on Israel, urging him to challenge Bowman due to the incumbent’s ‘effort to erode support for Israel on Capitol Hill and within the Democratic Party’ ”(The Times of Israel). This statement is incredibly important because it shows that Blake had doubts about Bowman's actions.

Overall, Jamaal Bowman has had his ups and downs and with his supporters. He was able to raise awareness to a well known problem but bring knowledge and a chance for potential peace between not only the people of Palestine and the different political sides in New York's District 16. He is trying and succeeding at stopping hatred that grew in peoples bias and did not focus on the unreasonable hatred he received for his acts. He was able to convince some people that his way was the right thing to do and those who didn't agree with him had a right to their

own opinion but he didn't want them to say things that were not factual and that's what he is teaching children at his school.