

State Legislators: Don't Restrict Free Market Enterprise

The American Legislative Exchange Council is America's largest nonpartisan, voluntary membership organization of state legislators dedicated to the principles of limited government, free markets and federalism. Comprised of nearly one-quarter of the country's state legislators and stakeholders from across the policy spectrum, ALEC members include policymakers representing more than 60 million Americans and businesses employing more than 30 million people.

On behalf of ALEC and its members, we strongly condemn the recent decision by Airbnb to begin denying service to Jewish-owned properties in Judea and Samaria (The West Bank). This abhorrent decision is both discriminatory in nature and bad as a matter of business.

We stand firmly in support of free market enterprise and advocate commercial policies that defend our citizens and state economies. Accordingly, twenty-six of our American states, both blue and red, have now joined the Federal government in implementing laws opposing commercial discrimination against parties who do business in Israel.

Airbnb's new policy is unquestionably discriminatory. Under this policy, an American owner of a rental property located in a majority-Jewish community in the West Bank would be barred from listing on Airbnb. In addition to discriminating against Jewish persons, we note that this policy would also prevent Christians from staying in these communities when visiting important heritage sites in places such as Bethlehem and Nazareth. Yet at the same time, Airbnb continues to welcome the listing of a property in immediately neighboring Palestinian Authority-controlled locales, where the PA in fact violently enforces a discriminatory policy barring all land sales to Jews.

It must also be highlighted that Airbnb has singled out Israel alone for this discriminatory treatment. While the company has stated, "each situation is unique and requires a case-by-case approach," so far the only country facing delisting is the Jewish state. Airbnb continues to list properties in other disputed regions, such as Western Sahara, northern Cyprus, Kashmir, and Tibet among other such places.

We stand unabashedly with Israel and remain firmly opposed to discrimination against Jews, Christians, and all other persons. As state government officials, we wish to put Airbnb on notice that they have run afoul of public policy, and likely the law in many jurisdictions, and that we will be pursuing action to protect our citizens and state economies from its discriminatory policy.

It is our hope that Airbnb will quickly realize that it has erred in adopting its new policy, and consequently reverse its decision to engage in discrimination.

Sincerely,

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Speaker Linda Upmeyer

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Maine

County Commissioner Andre Cushing
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Massachusetts

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Minnesota

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Speaker Philip Gunn

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