

Accountability for Withholding Aid and Relief Essentials (AWARE) Act One-Pager

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR)

Background: More than 100 nongovernmental organizations have found that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has heavily restricted the distribution of food, fuel, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance in Gaza, following Hamas' October 7, 2023, attacks. Palestinian families in Gaza continue to receive contradictory and counterproductive information regarding aid availability, often with little notice from the Netanyahu administration, which leads to confusion, puts them in dangerous situations, and diminishes their ability to secure aid. The United Nations Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs declared at the end of August 2025 that famine had set in in Gaza, affecting roughly half million people. While the State of Israel and Hamas entered into a ceasefire on October 10, 2025, with a renewed commitment to surging aid, the Netanyahu administration has continued to impose restrictions on humanitarian assistance and activities of aid workers. As a result, Palestinians continue to suffer from mass hunger.

The AWARE Act supports the ceasefire and seeks to hold accountable those who continue to withhold humanitarian assistance from civilians, wherever they may be. The bill articulates the United States' policy with respect to humanitarian assistance and provides the U.S. Government with the authority to impose diplomatic and financial sanctions on those obstructing humanitarian assistance, in order to change their actions.

What the Bill Would Do:

- Establish a Statement of Policy for the United States to Ensure Sufficient Humanitarian Assistance. The bill establishes that all protected persons are entitled to sufficient humanitarian assistance, and that if a foreign government is unable or unwilling to deliver and distribute aid, it must allow any and all U.S. and internationally recognized humanitarian organizations to deliver and distribute humanitarian assistance.
- Identify and Sanction Persons Obstructing Humanitarian Assistance. The bill calls on the President to identify foreign government officials and senior military officials and any third parties acting on behalf of a foreign government found to be restricting, diminishing, undermining, or preventing the delivery and distribution of sufficient humanitarian assistance to protected persons. Accordingly, the bill calls on the President to apply diplomatic sanctions, which prevent an individual from obtaining a visa to enter the United States, and to apply financial sanctions, which, using all powers of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, seeks to freeze and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property in the United States or in control of the United States. The bill empowers the President to apply such sanctions on all covered persons obstructing humanitarian aid and to encourage governments of other countries to apply similar sanctions.
- Increase Congressional Oversight of Persons Obstructing Humanitarian Assistance. This bill increases congressional oversight of those who are obstructing humanitarian assistance and sanctioned, and those the President does not intend to sanction. It also provides Congress the ability to block the President from specific applications or removals of sanctions.