

To the legislature:

I am writing in opposition to LD 1383. I oppose this bill as a citizen of the State of Maine, a mother, and a rabbi. I believe that it is the job of legislators and officials in our state to dedicate their time, resources, and attention to issues related to the direct welfare of citizens of Maine; to uphold constitutional values like due process and equal treatment under the law; and to be clear eyed about how their actions can hurt minority populations in our state, even if it isn't their intention.

As a citizen of the State of Maine, I live in a state where the public school system is ranked 40th out of 50 states. As a resident of Waterville, I now live in a city without a hospital. Most citizens of Maine – myself included – expect leadership for our elected officials in solving the most pressing problems in our local communities. This bill puts our legislators' attention elsewhere – asking them, and the State Treasurer, to act as arbiters of foreign policy and international law. Neither the Treasurer, nor our average legislator, has any expertise in these fields. Nor were they elected to keep their eyes on (often complex) foreign conflicts. The legislature is empowered to serve Maine's citizens and advance legislation that fulfills their basic obligations to the people they serve: making sure our kids are literate, our citizens have access to healthcare, our roads are paved, and our citizens are safe. As a citizen of this state, I ask that our legislators stick to what they know and what they have been charged to do: knowledgeably tend to the needs of Maine's citizens.

However, this bill draws our elected officials' attention, time, and resources elsewhere. According to this bill, the State should withdraw investments in arms manufacturers that do business with countries "accused of genocide." **Since when is it in line with American values to punish a person, entity, or nation based solely on an accusation from a non-profit organization?** That is a clear violation of due process, and an open invitation to biased actions and abuses of power. Some of the organizations mentioned in this bill – Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and even the United Nations – are not organizations with legal standing in the US and have been rightfully accused of longstanding bias against Israel, the true target of this bill. (See evidence below.)

Is it the job of our Treasurer to evaluate the bias of international bodies and non-profit organizations in order to make investments? I don't think so. It is the job of our elected officials to invest our state's resources where they will make the best return on the dollar for our pensioners. Our state employees have worked hard for decades and deserve a dignified retirement. Our officials should focus on fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility to state employees, not using their retirement funds as a political weapon against disfavored countries (and let's be honest, we're just talking about Israel.)

Which leads to my final point: we're really only talking about Israel. Of all of the countries currently accused of genocide, there is only one that would be realistically targeted. We know that the pension fund won't disinvest from the United States and China – we live in the US, and our economy is too intertwined with China to make disinvestment possible. The other countries

mentioned – such as Yemen, Sudan, Myanmar – are not connected in any meaningful way to the US economy. They don't produce goods exported to the US, nor are they global leaders in information technology, biomedical innovation, and popular culture. Only Israel is small enough to boycott, and economically successful enough to matter. And, yes, it is the world's only Jewish-majority country. It is the true target of this bill, but that fact is intentionally obscured in order to make this action ostensibly innocuous and righteous.

My request to you is this: please uphold your responsibility to the citizens of Maine and our state employees. Please publicly commit yourself to responsible governance, due process, and the rule of law. And most of all, please give me my time back to tend to my community, and not have to engage in a proxy fight over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in my backyard in Maine. All of us should be building bridges, and tending to the basic needs of a state deeply in need of competent care.

Respectfully submitted,
Rabbi Rachel M Isaacs
Waterville, Maine

Adendum:

1) On the anti-Israel bias of international bodies mentioned in this bill

The bill specifically names the United Nations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International as international bodies to make determinations from. Here are their records:

- UN Secretary-General [admitted](#) in 2025 that Israel suffers from UN "bias" and even "discrimination."
- Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in [June 2004](#): "The UN's own record on anti-Semitism has at times fallen short of the Organization's ideals...the General Assembly resolution of 1975, equating Zionism with racism, was an especially unfortunate decision. I am glad that it has since been rescinded."
- Amnesty USA's Executive Director was [widely condemned](#) for antisemitism after claiming that Israel "shouldn't exist as a Jewish state."
- Dan Balson, Amnesty International's former Advocacy Director for Europe and Eurasia, [wrote](#) that Amnesty, "has shown such disdain for Israelis' existential fears that it seems deliberately calculated to repel rather than attract and persuade."
- [According to Danielle Haas](#), former Senior Editor at Human Rights Watch (HRW), the group's work, "frequently violated basic editorial standards related to rigor, balance, and collegiality, when it comes to Israel."

- Israel has faced [well documented](#) and systemic discrimination at the UN, with resolutions disproportionately condemning Israel.
- ["The Double Standard in the Human Rights World"](#), reporting how international organizations that are supposed to be impartial are applying a double standard to Israel – *The Atlantic* (2025)
- “Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) are colossal...But both these colossi have one great prejudice: they seem to hate Israel.” – [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
- The founder of Human Rights Watch, Rober Bernstein, has [strongly criticized](#) the organization for its anti-Israel bias.
- “The United Nations’ Historic Anti-Israel Bias Emboldened Hamas” – [Congressman Steny Hoyer \(D-MD\)](#)
- [7 Problems With the UN Human Rights Council](#), which is “obsessed with demonizing Israel” while adopting zero resolutions for the “gross human rights abuses” perpetrated in Algeria, China, Cuba, Egypt, Gaza, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Zimbabwe, and many other countries.
- **The notion that the Board of MPERS can be making investment decisions that impact all Maine public employees' retirement based on what Amnesty International says is simply not compatible with fiduciary obligations.**

2) On the connection between anti-Israel rhetoric and the targeting of Jewish individuals and communities (three examples among many.)

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/12/us/pasadena-synagogue-vandalized.html>
- <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-806450>
- <https://abcnews.go.com/US/arson-pennsylvania-gov-shapiro-mansion-plead-guilty/story?id=126504348>

3) On Israel being the target of this bill

While this bill does not name Israel, ***there are few to zero supporters of this bill asking to divest from any country but Israel.*** LD 1383 is being [promoted](#) by an anti-Israel coalition that [denies](#) the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7. Maine DSA, which is one of the groups [campaigning](#) for the bill, held a rally on October 11, 2023 where they called the massacre on October 7, "morally and legally legitimate."