

Steve Silver
South Portland
LD 1383

Dear members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Steve Silver. I am a resident of South Portland, and I am writing today to oppose LD 1383. At best this bill is performative virtue signaling. At worst, it is a divisive and dangerous to Jewish Mainers. Sure, the bill makes no direct mention of Israel, but everyone knows who the sponsors of this bill are targeting. And bills like this one, where governments get involved in foreign affairs they have no business nor expertise in, that lead to disastrous consequences.

Look no further than the Bondi Beach massacre in Australia. Do you think such violent anti-Semitism came out of nowhere? No, it was normalized by the same anti-Israel, anti-Zionists who are championing LD 1383. It vilifies a nation that defended itself from a terrorist attack that saw children beheaded, women raped, elderly kidnapped, and thousands massacred during the October 7th attacks initiated by Hamas.

But let's look closer to home. Jews in Maine are experiencing a historic surge of antisemitism. In 2024-2025 alone:

- Multiple Jewish organizations in the state received death threats including letters saying “I will kill all at this place for Russia for Palestine.”
- A Jewish family in Damariscotta was told they weren’t welcome in a restaurant when the manager learned they were Jewish and had a connection to Israel.
- Flyers were put up in Bethel saying “Jews have no place in a healthy White society and are no longer welcome.”
- Flyers were put up in Portland encouraging residents to carry out a “D-day” against the Jewish community.
- Hundreds of emails were sent to USM educators saying “Fight Against Jewry is the Most Noble Fight That Ever Existed.”
- In Southern Maine schools, flyers for Jewish Student Unions are being ripped down, a Jewish boy had swastikas drawn on his laptop when the class studied Maus, and a Jewish girl had “Free Palestine” yelled at her by her classmates whenever she walked in the room.
- 74% percent of Jewish adults in Maine are somewhat concerned (44%) or very concerned (30%) about antisemitism in the state.
- 52% of Jewish adults in Maine have avoided activities in the past year due to fear of antisemitism.
- In the past year, 35% of Jewish adults in Maine have experienced verbal remarks, acts of vandalism, or physical threats or attacks motivated by antisemitism.

There is a heightened threat environment towards so many different faiths, religions, and minority groups right now. Think about how the Maine government subjectively determining which countries are good or bad—with no due process or course of appeal—would affect the people in Maine associated with those countries.

LD 1383 is a vote for division, distraction, and outrage. Instead of voting for LD 1383, Maine’s elected officials should CHOOSE MAINE—focusing on bringing concerned residents from different sides of the issue together to resolve differences and come up with ways our state can actually help solve problems.

And this is the real kicker. This bill does nothing to help Maine. In fact, it will decimate Maine’s public employee retirement investments as there are virtually no investments it could make that would not touch on Israel, China, or THE UNITED STATES. Yes, as the bill is currently written, Maine would have to divest from the United States based on private, outside organizations accusing the United States of war crimes. The state of Maine would literally have to tell BIW it is no longer welcome here and cancel nearly every single investment.

This Committee should spend its time focused on Maine’s needs – not playing model

UN.

LD 1383 is unconstitutionally overbroad, wildly impractical, and devastating to Maine's public employees' retirements and Maine's Jewish community. LD 1383 uses taxpayer dollars and state resources to comb through human rights reports from international bodies to subjectively determine which countries and companies to divest from—with no due process or recourse for appeal.

This bill is a disaster, and I hope you vote no.