

Connor Firth
Portland
LD 1383

To the Committee on State and Local Government,

I am writing as a concerned citizen in support of ME LD1383. As someone who grew up in and has, after some time away, returned to living in Maine, it has always been a point of pride that Maine, in our own slightly prickly way, pursues justice for the downtrodden and equality for the unheard, whether that be in advocacy for the rights of our state's athletes against incursions by the federal government, in our strength in responding to the tragedy that took place in Lewiston, in shoveling the driveways of our neighbors after a storm, and in our (if slow) support of the state's thriving immigrant communities.

With this in mind, it pains me to see the wealth of our state go towards entities and ends that, rather than embodying the Dirigo spirit of solidarity and morality, sow the seeds of division and hatred, and worse, provide or produce material support for states and actors that cause enormous, physical, irreversible harm to communities around the world and here in Maine.

It has been too long. I was born in this state twenty-five years ago, and since then, I have borne witness to needless destruction, destabilization, and killing across the world fueled by American technology, weapons, and intellectual property, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Gaza, Venezuela, and, may it never come to pass, Greenland. It sickens me to know that the way much of the world knows America (and by extension, Maine) is through the things we have taken from them - too many of which are never to return.

Even now, the tools we use in past and present against the rest of the world are being turned against our own citizens. The reprehensible, shameful actions undertaken by the Department of Homeland Security, and particularly by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, should shock and disgust every one of us. But these agents do not act alone: their campaign is spurred on by the very same establishments, corporations, and entities that this bill seeks to divest Maine from.

I sincerely hope that the committee will find it possible to free Maine from the moral weight of material support for these entities, who have so long stained the image of our people, our state, and our nation. Beyond the meaningful economic impact of divestment, the passage of this bill would again make Maine a forerunner in the fight against injustice at home and abroad. I hope that the committee will allow Maine to lead again.