

To the State and Local Government Committee,

I am writing to express my support for LD 1383 - An Act to Require State Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations. I am a Jewish Mainer and a descendent of Holocaust survivors – this bill represents exactly the kind of principled, impactful action that I hope my government is capable of. I believe that LD 1383 provides an invaluable opportunity for the State of Maine to stand firmly on the right side of history, and to make a substantial material difference in the fight for human rights both within our nation and across the globe, especially in areas under specific threats of genocide, such as Palestine. I hope that the Committee supports this bill and does right by the history of my family and community.

Furthermore, as an employee of the City of Portland who pays into Maine PERS, I have an additional personal stake in the divestment of state funds from human rights violators. Simply put, I do not want the value generated by my daily labor to contribute to the destruction of communities, to the ending of innocent lives, or to any industry that profits from such atrocities. As a future beneficiary of Maine PERS, I would like to make my preference clear: there is never a financial benefit that is worth the perpetration of violence, surveillance, or state-sponsored terror.

Please consider the perspectives I have offered in this testimony. I am hopeful that the Committee is able to appreciate the large-scale historical significance of the decision before them.

Sincerely,

Ernest Braun