

Anna Parker
Portland
LD 1383

To the Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,

My name is Anna Parker, and I live in Portland, where I work as a substitute teacher in the district and volunteer with Portland Adult Education. I'm writing today in strong support of LD 1383.

As a substitute teacher, I've spent many mornings watching six- and seven-year-olds recite the Pledge of Allegiance. They say the words "with liberty and justice for all" with such earnest enthusiasm that it catches me off guard every time.

Lately, I find myself asking what it means to teach those words at a time when the systems governing their lives so clearly contradict them.

Currently, our public tax dollars are invested in companies tied to serious human rights violations—such as genocide abroad and the inhumane abduction and detention of people here at home. These investments are not abstract. I see their impacts in my community every day.

We are living in a time when we're both more connected yet more disconnected than ever—when the information we consume makes it easier to view one another through fear, as threats, statistics, or political tools rather than as neighbors and community members.

But while this climate affects all of us, its consequences are not shared equally. The way detentions and deportations are being carried out is frightening and unlawful, and the resulting fear is concentrated in communities that have long experienced disproportionate enforcement and unequal treatment under the law.

We're all seeing these impacts ripple across our communities. I've watched capable, engaged students and adult learners stop showing up to class because of fear and uncertainty. This is how human rights abuses take root locally—not only through force, but through fear that erodes access to education, safety, and participation in public life, with disproportionate effects on specific populations.

Fear should never stand between a person and their education. And it should never be reinforced by the financial choices of the state they live in.

From a legal standpoint, continuing these investments puts Maine at risk of complicity in human rights abuses. LD 1383 helps protect the state by aligning our investments with international law and basic principles of human dignity.

Financially, divestment is not a risk. The holdings named in this bill make up a very small portion of the portfolio, and Maine's fiduciaries have already demonstrated that they can divest responsibly while continuing to grow the fund.

At its core, this bill is about aligning our values with our actions. I urge you to support LD 1383 so that Maine's investments no longer fuel fear and division—but instead reflect the liberty and justice we teach our children to stand for.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
 Anna Parker