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Bangor
LD 1383

I am writing to urge you to vote against LD 1383 - a bill that is a major distraction, impossibly impractical, and potentially devastating to the state's Maine Public Employees Retirement System. Instead of solving the cost-of-living crisis facing Mainers, LD 1383 uses taxpayer dollars and state resources to comb through human rights reports from international bodies (many with a documented history of bias towards Israel) in order to subjectively determine which countries and companies to divest from—with no due process or recourse for appeal.

If the standards are applied fairly, this bill will either be a historic disaster, forcing Maine to divest from companies associated with the US and China—which are also countries that have been “credibly accused” of gross human rights violations, the bill’s standard for divestment—or Israel will be primarily targeted (as the bill’s supporters are asking for), opening up the state to divisive litigation, encouraging hatred towards the state’s Jewish community at a time of skyrocketing antisemitism, and inviting a negative national spotlight for years to come.

As a member of Maine’s Jewish community, I have been watching and experiencing the rising antisemitism in Maine for years now. The violent rhetoric against Jews, harassment, vandalism and threats are frightening. As a Jew in Maine, I am increasingly excluded from spaces where I previously felt comfortable and accepted. This bill will ensure that these trends continue and send the message that I and my community are no longer welcome here.