

Dear Members of the Maine Legislature,

I am writing out of deep alarm and genuine heartbreak about LD 1383.

At a moment when Maine families are struggling to afford housing, healthcare, and education, and when the retirement security of our public employees demands careful and disciplined stewardship, the Legislature is being asked to take Maine down a very different path — into global foreign policy through a bill that is impractical, divisive, and dangerous in its real-world consequences. **This is emphatically not what Maine needs right now.**

LD 1383 would require the state to make sweeping investment decisions based on subjective judgments drawn from international bodies with long and well-documented histories of bias, particularly toward Israel. The bill offers no due process, no meaningful standard of appeal, and no clear guidance for how these determinations would be applied consistently. While Israel is not named explicitly, the intent to single out the world's only Jewish state, and those who do business with or support it, is painfully clear.

If the bill's standards were applied honestly and evenly, Maine would be forced to consider divesting not only from companies connected to Israel, but also from companies tied to the United States, China, and many other countries that have been accused, credibly or otherwise, of serious human rights violations over the past 25 years. Such an outcome would be disastrous for Maine's investment system and fundamentally incompatible with the state's fiduciary obligation to invest prudently on behalf of public employees.

What is far more likely, however, based on the rhetoric surrounding this bill, is a double standard: Israel targeted almost exclusively, while other countries accused of similar or worse conduct are quietly ignored. That path would embroil Maine in years of litigation, invite negative national attention, and squander state resources on symbolic political gestures rather than tangible help for people who are struggling right here at home.

But policy failures, serious as they are, are not my deepest fear.

What keeps me awake at night is what this bill signals and accelerates at a moment when antisemitism in Maine is already surging. Jewish institutions in our state have received death threats and are forced to use scarce dollars to pay for ongoing security. Swastikas and white supremacist flyers have appeared in our towns. Jewish children are being harassed in schools. Calls to "globalize the intifada" have traumatized the Jewish community. Families are changing how they live, avoiding public spaces, events, and even everyday activities out of fear. This is not theoretical. This is daily life for many Jewish Mainers.

In this already volatile climate, some supporters of LD 1383 are advancing misleading and outrageous claims that link this bill to the anti-ICE movement, feeding conspiracy theories that collapse Jews, Israel, the IDF, and ICE into a single imagined enemy. This kind of

rhetoric is not merely irresponsible. It is dangerous. It legitimizes antisemitic tropes and conspiracy myths and further endangers Maine Jews.

I never imagined that I would be weighing whether my family's long-term safety in Maine might be affected by a piece of legislation. Yet here I am, asking myself whether this state, my beloved home, is choosing a path that makes me, my husband, and our children less safe, less welcome, and more vulnerable. That is not a question any Mainer should ever have to ask.

LD 1383 will not improve human rights abroad. It will not lower costs at home. What it will do is deepen division, undermine trust, jeopardize retirement funds, and pour fuel on an already alarming rise in antisemitism.

I urge you to reject LD 1383 and choose a different path, one that keeps Maine focused on Maine, protects all who live here, and resists the temptation to score symbolic political points at the expense of real people's lives and safety.

Respectfully,

Dawn LaRochelle  
31 Woodmont Street  
Portland, ME 04102