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LD 1383

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Testimony: In-person, Rm. 214
Bill: LD 1383. Divestment bill.

Good afternoon chairs Sen. Baldacci, Rep. Salisbury and honored members of the Committee on State and Local Government.

My name is Kelly Merrill and I'm here today in my capacity as the Co-Chair of the Maine Green Independent Party, representing 37K members statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1383, the Divestment Bill, "An Act to Require State Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations."

There are some matters that require a nuanced analysis to support a position. This is not one.

We are into a third year of genocide being live-streamed to our phones. And after having normalized genocide and making a mockery of international law, imperial violence has now turned inward.

Last summer we saw the budget for ICE explode. ICE, a rogue agency without accountability, is now the largest and best-funded agency in the US. At \$37.5B, were it a country's military, it would rank 13th-best-funded in the world.

And this while housing and food insecurity rocket, and health-markers and reading-and-math scores plummet. Instead of investing in sustaining life, the US has invested in endless war and endless death for the sake of profit, driving genocides, ecocides, and regime changes that cause mass migration.

We did not agree to a militarized state nor did we agree to an ethnosestate.

Yet masked, armed paramilitary forces terrorize our communities, targeting and abducting Black and Brown citizens, tribal members and non-citizens alike; ramming cars, smashing windows, humiliating elders, sexually-assaulting women, gassing babies, and ending those who bear witness, operating with impunity, and spurred on by the dangerous and inciting words and actions of the Administration. They've been busy today in our state the past two days, abducting people from Grant Street, Brighton Avenue, and Washington Ave in Portland, and Home Depot in South Portland. They abducted one woman today after she dropped off her child at school.

We need to stand up to this tyranny. It is a moral injury to us all. We ask that you divest our state from the crimes of the billionaire class that is perpetuating and profiting, from genocide and human trafficking, while robbing us of our humanity.

This is a really important political moment and this is a really important bill. It is a time for us to exercise courage. We urge this committee vote ought to pass on LD 1383.