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Portland
LD 1383

Hello, my name is Loren Johnston. I live in Scarborough, Maine. As a retired Social Worker and Counselor who worked in public schools in Maine, I am a recipient of Maine State Retirement benefits. I am here today to support LD1383. 81 years ago this month, my Aunt and my two cousins were dug out of a collapsed building by my uncle with his bare hands. Aunt Renee was dead. Milou, 13 years old, suffered in agony for two weeks before she died next to her sister Ainee in bed with a shattered leg. The SS officer who designed that rocket, oversaw its production, including the use of slave labor, later became a US citizen and was instrumental in developing rockets for NASA. In 1944, my mother was arrested and briefly forced to work in a data center with punch card machines leased from IBM. The Gestapo used their IBM-leased machines to compile the deportation lists used to transport over 3 million people to the gas chambers. IBM denied responsibility for 55 years, ironically agreeing to deposit 3 million dollars in the Holocaust Victims Fund is facing lawsuits against them were dropped.

My mother served as a Red Cross Nurse at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, when it was liberated in 1945. The company that produced Zyklon B, used in the gas chambers in Bergen-Belsen and all concentration and death camps, never paid reparations. One of its subsidiaries, BAFS, is now the world's largest manufacturer of chemical agents.

For the past few years, I have seen the images of children pulled out of collapsed apartment buildings in Syria and Ukraine, and of children murdered in their homes by Hamas. Still, I could distance myself because we were not supporting the people doing the killing. That changed with Hind Jabar, a 5-year-old Palestinian girl who, along with 6 family members, was killed in the family car by Tank fire and an American-made missile while attempting to flee from the shelling and bombing of their neighborhoods. She picked up the mobile phone after her sister was killed and pleaded with the Red Crescent for help for over 3 hours until the phone lost power. "Please come get me. I am scared. There is a tank close to us." The Red Crescent obtained permission from the IDF to send an ambulance to rescue her. Hind, her 6 relatives, and the two Red Crescent ambulance crews' bodies were recovered days later when the IDF withdrew. US manufacturers have supplied over 90,000 120mm tank rounds and mortar shells that were used against civilian neighborhoods in Gaza. There is profit and career advancement to be achieved by destroying children.

This is not a political statement.

This is a request to protect the innocent.

We may not be able stop the violence, but we can choose not to finance it through LD1383.

Thank you

Milou Annie. Hind.