

Tamra Benson
Strong
LD 1383

Hello, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and the committee. My name is Tamra Benson. I live in Strong. I am testifying in support of LD 1383.

You've all probably been at events or meetings with land acknowledgements. Although it is important to acknowledge the fact that we are on stolen land and that atrocities were committed by colonizers in the theft of the land, that is not enough. What if instead of just acknowledging past genocides we actively oppose current genocides - or at least stop funding them?

A UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry report in September 2025 concluded that Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. It's not up for debate. It's genocide. This violence did not start in 2023. Israel has been committing an ethnic cleansing of Palestinians since the 1940s. For nearly 80 years, they have been systematically destroying their livelihoods and snuffing out every effort to bring them relief. Israel has created an Apartheid state and turned Gaza into an open air prison.

And what about what is happening here? The kidnapping of our neighbors from their homes, from their cars, from schools, from grocery stores, without just cause or due process. The racial profiling of people, whether they are citizens or not. The criminalization and brutalization of peaceful protesters exercising their first amendment rights. The mistreatment, medical neglect, abuse, and sexual assault of people in detention facilities. The murder of unarmed civilians. The tear gassing of children as young as six months old.

If you want to support genocide, if you want to support international and domestic human rights violations, personally, that's up to you. It's a really despicable thing to do, but it's your choice.

Do NOT force Mainers to be complacent in genocide. Do not force Mainers to be complacent in domestic human rights violations, the disregard for first amendment rights, and the murder of unarmed civilians. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1383. Thank you.