

Tanvi K
Rockport
LD 1383

Dear honorable members of the committee,

I urge you to support LD 1383, "An Act to Require State Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations". As someone who lives, works and pays taxes here in Maine, it is an unthinkably simple way to tilt the scales of the world toward justice -- why would we want any money invested in detention, war and genocide?

Maine's track record for divestment is strong, with state divestment in 1985 from corporations complicit in apartheid South Africa, and divestment from fossil fuels in 2021. We have before us another opportunity that will help tilt the scales towards justice: with the rise of fascism today here in the United States, where ICE is on a rampage kidnapping our beloved neighbors, and with the US funding and fueling war and genocide abroad, this bill is a small but significant step towards building a better world where all people can live in safety and freedom.

LD 1383 would mean a small fraction of Maine's state funds are divested -- Maine's state pension fund MPERS would be divesting only around 1-2% of its total portfolio. The impact of this, however small, signifies the will of the people: we do not want to fund or profit from war or genocide. Last year in the occupied West Bank, I saw what the American government, and corporations based in the United States are funding: children playing on the street shot by snipers, families forced out at dawn to their homes being crushed by bulldozers, all while feeling the tremors of bombs falling on the ground just 20 miles away in Gaza: American bombs. Right now, as we speak, immigrant communities in Portland are having to shelter in place, children staying home from school, because of fears of the anonymous masked agents paid by the government to kidnap, detain and dehumanize our neighbors. We can - we must - envision a better world: one in which children in Portland can go to school without worrying that their parents will be abducted at pick-up time, where children in Gaza can play without fear of being killed by airstrike, one where we fund education, healthcare, food, art, and all that is life-affirming. With this bill, the first of its kind, Maine is helping forge a path of justice.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of LD 1383.