

LD 1383, An Act To Require the State To Divest Itself of Assets Invested in Corporations That Contribute to Genocide and Human Rights Abuses

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Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the committee. My name is Jill McCain, I am a resident of Denmark. My testimony is given in support of LD1383.

I believe that Maine should invest our state money in a way that aligns with our values, and should not be supporting or profiting from companies that are enabling human rights abuses. If we continue to allow our investments to fund these companies, we are playing our own part in these abuses continuing. While we are not the ones directly committing the abuses, we are helping to fund these abhorrent actions. We should not support any kind of connection with companies that associate with governments engaged in apartheid, ethnic cleansing, genocide or war crimes.

Beyond the moral and ethical implications of funding these companies and the incredible harm they create abroad, we also risk the safety and rights of our own Maine residents when we invest in them. The same companies that are responsible for creating weapons that support war crimes abroad are also responsible for persecuting U.S. citizens through surveillance that enables federal agencies like ICE to violate our citizens' rights. We have seen in recent days and months how these weapons can be turned against our own people, including American-born and foreign-born residents. Constitutional rights and civil rights are being violated on a daily basis with the help of these surveillance tools and military weapons.

While divestment won't stop these violations from occurring, it is still imperative that we stand firmly behind our values and put our values into action. Right now, we can choose "put our money where our mouth is," uphold the values of our state Constitution, and divest from companies that make a mockery of these values. We have done it before- Maine's investment policy already restricts investments into fossil fuels, prime commercial paper, and for-profit prisons. I believe we must do it again, this time to stand resolutely against the abuse of human rights, both domestically and abroad.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to align our investments with our values by supporting LD 1383.