

I am writing as a constituent who is deeply troubled by the proposed legislation LD 1383.

I want to explain, as clearly as I can, what this moment feels like as a Jewish person living in Maine.

Twice a week I walk past protests in my own community accusing Israel of genocide. The people holding these signs are often my neighbors, sometimes people I know and respect. What is striking to me is not only the intensity of their focus on Israel, but the absence of comparable outrage toward other nations whose records of mass violence, ethnic cleansing, or repression are well documented.

There have been no comparable protests over the actions of Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Russia, China, Sudan, or Myanmar — countries that have engaged in mass displacement, civilian targeting, ethnic repression, or documented crimes against humanity. Some of these conflicts have produced death tolls far exceeding those in Gaza. Yet they do not provoke marches, boycotts, or legislative action.

This disparity is difficult to ignore.

The term “genocide” has a specific legal meaning, defined in the 1948 Genocide Convention. It refers to the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. That definition matters. When the term is expanded beyond its legal meaning and applied selectively, it loses clarity and becomes a political weapon rather than a moral one.

What also troubles me is what is not being acknowledged. On October 7th, Israeli civilians were deliberately targeted, murdered, and taken hostage by Hamas. Hamas’s charter explicitly calls for the destruction of Israel and the elimination of Jews as a people. That is not incidental. That is explicit genocidal intent. Yet there have been no widespread protests condemning this, no legislative urgency attached to it, and little public reckoning with what that means.

I am not writing to deny Palestinian suffering or to defend every action of the Israeli government. War is brutal, and civilians suffer terribly in all wars. But the current discourse treats Israel as uniquely illegitimate, uniquely criminal, and uniquely deserving of isolation. That framing does not appear anywhere else in international politics, and it raises deeply uncomfortable questions.

As a Jew, what this feels like is being singled out — not for actions alone, but for identity. It feels like watching old patterns re-emerge under new language: moral certainty aimed in only one direction, historical context stripped away, and Jewish fear dismissed as exaggeration or bad faith.

I urge you to consider carefully what message this legislation sends. Not only to Israel, but to Jewish residents of Maine. Many of us are watching this moment with growing alarm, wondering why our concerns are so easily discounted, and why the standard applied to the Jewish state is one applied to no other.

I ask that you reconsider support for divestment measures framed around an ungrounded use of the term “genocide,” and that you approach this issue with consistency, historical awareness, and care for the real consequences such actions have on Jewish communities in this state.

Thank you  
Julie Rose  
Rockland, ME