

Dear Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,

I am a newly retired Christian minister who lived and worked in Israel and Palestine on behalf of Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Christian Disciples of Christ from 2013-2018 with the YWCA of Palestine. I've seen first-hand the devastating effects of human rights abuses, war crimes, and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people during the years I served my church.

I was also in Minneapolis when Renee Good was murdered by ICE and know American citizens, including pastors, across the country who have been pepper sprayed at protests for demanding that ICE leave their communities. The violence is now here.

Attending protest marches is only one way to say No to this escalating violence. Another nonviolent way is to support divestment of the corporations that are supporting the abuses or who are profiting from the violence or genocide.

Faith communities throughout the United States have passed resolutions to divest from these corporations already. It is time for our secular institutions, like cities and states, to do the same. I am proud to be a member of Belfast, Maine that passed a divestment resolution in November 2024.

People of faith and conscience must not bankroll violence and oppression.

For all these reasons I ask you to support LD 1383 - a law that will prohibit the State of Maine from investing in corporations that profit from human rights abuses, including genocide and ICE detention. Our public funds must not bankroll violence and oppression anywhere in the world.

Thank you for hearing my statement of support for LD 1383 and for acting to protect all of our rights.

Rev. Loren McGrail, Belfast ME

Testimony for LD1383
01/21/26