

Letter of Testimony in support of the passage of LD 1383

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Good morning, Members of the committee (on State and Local Government),

My name is Robin Newhall. I am a Maine resident of the town of Wayne.

Maine Public Employees Retirement System...Maine PERS manages the retirement funds of teachers, legislators, judges, fire and police, some university professors, librarians, municipal workers, town clerks...folks who help us to register to vote, collect taxes so we can have nice things like libraries, snow-removal, parks, boat launches for summer fun etc...

Most of these state employee groups take an oath to do this important work...to run our state efficiently, safely and with integrity. Let me highlight some of the keywords that these oaths all share...

- responsibility for welfare of citizens
- upholding of laws
- safety
- well-being
- security
- health
- prosperity
- respect
- accountability
- to the best of my abilities

These are words spoken out loud and promised by the very people in our communities across Maine who defend, practice, uphold and exemplify Democracy in varied ways. Their entire career is specifically to give all Maine citizens a safe, healthy, secure, convenient structure to daily life...for our well-being in this beautiful state.

I ask with sensibility and urgency that you pass LD 1383 and allow Maine to make a strong statement about divesting from war and the atrocities that war causes. This will ensure that the Maine PERS investment team will have to seek out earning returns from stocks and bonds that also uphold the principles and statutes of Democracy. It makes absolutely NO sense to grow and gain interest from companies that make a profit off of causing harm, inflicting pain and suffering, dismantling the rights of others and worst of all, killing innocent people, many of whom are children. All off the backs of our own keepers and upholders of Democracy...our Maine public employees...who contribute to these retirement funds.

Please stop this insanity and make it make sense! Vote in LD 1383 and make Maine an accountable leader in divestment and a state that invests in humanity, freedom and democracy around the world. Thank you for your time.

Robin Newhall