

January 21, 2026

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

Thank you to Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Committee for allowing me to speak today in favor of LD 1383. My name is Erika Arthur. I'm a resident of Freedom and a former state employee.

As we are just past Dr. King's birthday, I am particularly inspired by his fearless clarity about what it looks like to honor and protect our "single garment of destiny"¹ by rooting out injustice everywhere. Dr. King's friend, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, used the word "interbeing" to describe this same ethical commitment. Simply put, we are not separate from one another; what I do impacts my neighbors and what they do impacts me. This is the ethos of Maine, at its best; I see this kind of solidarity in action all the time in my rural community. Now, this perspective can help us see that the weapons and aircraft we invest in with millions of Maine dollars are the same ones that tear through homes in Gaza, that terrorize and destroy families right here at home, and that perpetuate cycles of violence.

Since you have all chosen to be public servants, I suspect that like me, you lose sleep trying to find effective ways to align your actions with your values, to move the needle even just a little in the right direction. Each day, with a broken heart, I watch the violence we are helping to fund and try to do small things within my power to help protect what Dr. King and others would call the Beloved Community, our shared humanity.

Now, with LD 1383, you have a chance to take powerful action with real consequences, far more powerful than what we can each do as individuals. As we have seen throughout history, courage is contagious. I urge you to pass this bill into law and take Maine money out of genocide and human rights abuses. The time is now to invest in each other and the world we want to see. Let Maine be a beacon of ethical lawmaking, as it has been in the past.

Thank you,
Erika Arthur

¹ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail,"
https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html